



Title : Problems of English teaching in Sri Lanka: how they affect teaching efficacy

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**PROBLEMS OF ENGLISH TEACHING IN SRI LANKA:
HOW THEY AFFECT TEACHING EFFICACY**

Mahan Aloysius

**A thesis submitted to the University of Bedfordshire in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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ABSTRACT

Concerned to comprehend the teaching efficacy of English teachers in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, this thesis investigated contentions by principals, retired teachers and resource personnel that Sri Lankan teachers' lack of teaching effectiveness (teaching behaviours that influence student learning) accounted for students' low English attainment; and counter claims by English teachers that their teaching efficacy (beliefs in their abilities to affect student learning) was undermined by classroom and other-related problems.

This mixed-method research comprised two stages. In a preliminary study, 298 students and twenty-four teachers from twelve secondary schools participated in a survey designed to understand challenges encountered in the teaching and learning of English. With a similar purpose, thirty-four English lessons involving 320 students and ten teachers were observed. Interviews concerning the aspects underpinning effective English teaching were conducted with five principals, three English resource personnel and three retired teachers. In the main study, sixty-two teachers from thirty-five secondary schools were surveyed and twenty interviewed to identify factors which affected the teaching efficacy of English teachers. Participating schools were categorized vis-à-vis their students' performance: low-performing and high-performing.

Findings support English teachers' views concerning their teaching efficacy. Teacher perception revealed associations between the lack of teaching efficacy of English teachers in low and high-performing schools, and teacher background/parental duties/self-development, classroom problems and inadequate educational resources. No explicit evidence was found that students' poor English attainment in low-performing schools was due to their teachers' lack of teaching effectiveness. Observations showed that students were deprived of external resources which assisted students in high-performing schools to become proficient in English.

New insights about Jaffna teachers' efficacy indicate the need for a more context-specific English language curriculum in Sri Lanka, informed by teachers' knowledge of their students' English learning needs at a local level if teaching efficacy and English attainment are to be enhanced.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Bedfordshire.

It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Name of Candidate: Mahan Aloysius

Signature: 

Date: July 2015

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated...

To my beloved mother who continues to love me from ABOVE,

*To my loving aunts Anne and Rita who gave me their best till the end of their lives
and*

*To my dearest cousin Jennet who completed her life journey as a very young and
budding teacher of English.*

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABOE	Activity Based Oral English
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DoE	Department of Education
EL2	English as a Second Language
ELSP	English as a Life-Skill Programme
ELT	English Language Teaching
GCE (A/L) or A/L	General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level)
GCE (O/L) or O/L	General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level)
L2	Second Language
MoE	Ministry of Education
NCOE	National Colleges of Education
NIE	National Institute of Education
SBA	School Based Assessment
TTC	Teachers' Training College
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

1. Background and Rationale of Study

Introduction

The research problem investigated in this doctoral study was informed by the teaching experiences of the researcher in the context of Jaffna, one of the Northern districts of Sri Lanka. Whilst teaching English as a second language to students in a secondary school, he experienced various problems and challenges in the teaching and student learning of English such as lack of English resources in the classroom, lack of motivation of students to learn English and lack of English language exposure for students to practice what they learn in the language lesson are a few examples to mention. These problems and challenges on the one hand, prevented teachers from working effectively in the classroom and on the other hand left more than half of the student populace without a pass in the Ordinary Level¹ (O/L or G.C.E. O/L) English examination. For example, the pass rate of students in the O/L English language in 2011 in one of the educational zones (see 2.2.2 for explanation on educational zone) in the district of Jaffna was forty-three per cent (Results Analysis – O/L, 2011). In addition, the researcher observed that students in the Advanced Level² (A/L or G.C.E. A/L) classes did not generally

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1. It is a General Certificate of Education (GCE) qualification in Sri Lanka, conducted by the Ministry of Education (MoE) for students at the end of Grade Eleven (age sixteen). It is based on the British Ordinary Level qualification. Though a qualification in its own right, it is more often taken in prerequisite for the Advanced Level education.
 2. It is a General Certificate of Education (GCE) qualification in Sri Lanka, conducted by the MoE for students at the end of Grade Thirteen (age nineteen). It is similar to the British Advanced Level. The qualification is also used as an entrance exam for Sri Lankan state universities.

consider the English subject important as it was not compulsory at A/L and consequently, the majority of the students left the school with a minimum level of English in spite of studying the language for more than ten years. The researcher also considered that the challenges related to English Language Teaching (ELT) were hard to overcome or became more acute as the educational context of Sri Lanka was hugely affected by the prolonged internal political turmoil of the country. (All of the above are discussed in greater detail below).

Furthermore, it was a recurring experience of the researcher that teachers of English frequently encountered criticisms from school principals, resource personnel of ELT and retired teachers of English that the teaching of English by the current teachers of English was not effective in order to improve students' knowledge of English; by effectiveness in English teaching they meant the daily preparation of the lesson, delivering creative lessons to motivate students, fulfilling various learning needs of the students, self-development of the teachers and fulfilling the ELT regulations laid by the educational authorities (see chapter six for more details). In many such situations teachers expressed frustration that their efforts to increase effectiveness in their teaching had been hindered and stifled by many classroom and other problems mentioned above.

It is against this background that this doctoral research investigated how secondary school (Grades Six to Eleven) teachers of English who teach English as a second language in state schools in Jaffna, Sri Lanka considered their English teaching efficacy had been influenced or affected by the classroom problems and socio-economic and political challenges they encountered. The study sought to bring new insights to teaching efficacy within the context of ELT which is an under-researched area.

This opening chapter is divided into two parts. Part one presents the background of the study and part two explains the rationale of the study. Part two also introduces the research problem through attribution theory which attempts to understand the attributions the teachers make to their failure in effective teaching of English. The aim, focus and importance of the current study, the research

questions employed in this study and an overview of the chapters to follow are also presented in part two.

1.1 The background of the study

Since the current study is related to teaching and learning of the English language in Sri Lanka, the background of the study informs the reader with a general view of the introduction, development and the current state of the English language in Sri Lanka. This is essential for the reader to understand the rationale of the study which will be discussed in part two.

1.1.1 English language in Sri Lanka

1.1.1.1 Introduction and teaching of English Language

Although Sinhala and Tamil are the two main languages in present-day Sri-Lanka, English has been in use since the 1800s when Sri Lanka came under British colonization, and until now the role of English in various spheres of Sri Lanka such as civil administration, education and industry has been very significant. When the British took charge of the island there were divisions in it such as low country Sinhalese³, Kandyan Sinhalese and Tamils areas. The British did not want to change this existing social order immediately but maintained a sharp distinction between the rulers and the ruled. In 1829 a Royal Commission called the ‘Colebrooke and Cameron Commission’ (CCC) assessed the administration of the Island. The commission believed that the administrative division encouraged social and cultural divisions and proposed that the country should be brought under one uniform administrative system. The commission also voted for a change in the membership of the administrative service so that local citizens would be included in the civil service. Hence a need of studying the English language arose for those engaged in the civil service (Saunders, 2007).

3. The Southern part of Sri Lanka is called low-country in contrast to its central part which comprises of many hill countries.

The opening of the Ceylon [British name for Sri Lanka] Civil Service to Sri Lankans required that a new emphasis be placed on English education. In time, the opening contributed to the creation of a Westernized elite, whose members would spearhead the drive for independence in the twentieth century. The [CCC] emphasized the standardization of the educational curriculum and advocated the substitution of English for local languages. Local English schools were established, and the missionary schools that had previously taught in the vernacular also adopted English (Ross and Savanda, 1988:18).

However, it was not the very first instance when the indigenous people had had the opportunity to learn English as Christian missionaries had established English language schools when Ceylon was declared a British Crown colony in 1802 and started introducing their learning and religion to the local people in English. But proposals of the Colebrooke and Cameron Commission (CCC) made English the official working language and consequently it was recommended that English be the primary medium of education in secondary schools and universities.

Opportunities of employment in the government sector were made available to Sri Lankans who had received education in the English medium and thereby demonstrated fluency in English (Saunders, *ibid.*). All government schools which were using the local languages as the medium of instruction were brought under a newly formed School Commission controlled by the Anglican clergy who would enforce the recommendations of the CCC. Consequently, the national languages of Sinhala and Tamil were largely neglected in the school curriculum (Perera, 1969 in *ibid.*).

1.1.1.2 Status of English in the state schools during colonial time

Since the English schools were fee levying schools, the English education they provided was available only to an elite who were economically established and expected subsequently to become administrators in the government civil service under British supervision (UNESCO, 1993). The Anglo-vernacular schools were established for the children of the lower middle class Sinhalese and Tamil officials in the colonial administration and these schools were meant to make their children fit for lower rank posts in the government. Besides these privileged people from the upper and middle classes, the large number of Sinhala and Tamil people who could not afford to enter such schools got free education in their vernacular

language schools (also known as traditional schools) which continued to operate mainly in rural areas. This system led to English being considered as the language of upper class people and paved the way for social inequality. Job opportunities in the government sectors and numerous clerical posts in the colonial administration were given only to the students educated in English medium schools. Hence a class distinction (underpinned by the English language) prevailed in the social life during the time of the British rule (Punchi, 2001). As the colonial government administration expanded and more jobs became available, the only qualification for these jobs opportunities was the knowledge of English (Ruberu, 1969). As such, English education in the colonial period assured job opportunities and was considered to be of high social prestige and economic advantage. Thus two distinct traditions in education were identified in the colonial times of the British: one for the privileged few bestowing on them affluence and prestige and the other for the poor masses to reconcile them to their poverty (Perusinghe, 1969).

1.1.1.3 Status of English after colonial time

When Sri Lanka became independent in 1948, the English language gradually shifted from its status of being the medium of education to the status of a second language subject in the general curriculum. Consequently, the local languages, Sinhala and Tamil became the medium of instruction from primary to tertiary level education. However, the use and influence of English in the field of education and the civil affairs of the country could not be easily avoided. Though the English language was seen as a source of social divisions during the colonial time, people realised its potential in their social life. Firstly, it functioned as a link language between different ethnic groups in Sri Lanka. Secondly, within and outside of Sri Lanka it was seen as a requirement for the development of both the people and the country (Kandiah, 2007). These two functions of the English language have played an important role in determining the educational and language policies in the independent Sri Lanka (Karunaratne, 2009).

1.1.1.4 English education in the contemporary Sri Lanka

The policy of teaching English as a second language to all people in Sri Lanka was taken into special consideration from the 1990s, first, to bring about national harmony among the different ethnic communities and second, to equip the younger generation, in view of developing the country, with English so that they could gain appropriate knowledge required for jobs in the modern market (De Mel, 2001 in Karunaratne, 2003). In 1991, the National Education Commission in view of formulating a national policy on education carried out a field study which identified the improvement of English language teaching (ELT) in schools as one of the priority areas. Hence the 1997 educational reforms proposed the following to be implemented to update the standard of ELT in Sri Lanka.

- Introduction of Activity Based Oral English (ABOE): It is a spoken English programme specifically designed for students in Grades One and Two to use simple English for communication. Children are taught oral English while they are engaged in guided plays and activities (see detailed description in section i. a) of 2.3.1.1)
- Training adequate numbers of teachers for English
- Teaching of formal English from Grade Three
- Bilingual teaching for selected subjects from Grades Six to Nine: In order to provide an opportunity to all students to acquire proficiency of both first language (Sinhala or Tamil) and English, students are given options to follow certain subjects in English and the rest in their respective first languages (see detailed description in section i. of 2.3.1.2)
- Alternative English syllabuses at Grades Ten and Eleven
- General English for comprehension and communication at GCE (A/L) as an optional subject (General Education Reforms – Executive summary, 1997 in Perera, 2001).

Further educational reforms related to ELT were introduced in 2003 to extend the ABOE programme from Grades Three to Five and the bilingual programme to the senior secondary Grades from Ten to Thirteen (Little, 2007).

Though various educational reforms have sought to make English a means of communication among the different ethnic communities and to make its instrumental advantages available to all Sri Lankans, the objectives were not fully achieved in relation to the whole student populace in the country. English still

remains a marker of the higher social classes rather than a language of everyone (Karunaratne, 2009).

1.2 The rationale of the study

1.2.1 The context

There is a general perception in the educational field of Sri Lanka that the lack of effectiveness in teaching the English language is one of the reasons for the failure or the underperformance of students in learning English (Wijesinghe, 2004; Sumanasekera, 2010; Wijesekera, 2012; Premalal, 2014). However, according to the former teaching experiences of the researcher and his colleagues, the educational authorities such as school principals, resource personnel of English language teaching (ELT) and even retired teachers of English failed to understand this general perception in connection with various other problems which contributed to the failure of ELT in Sri Lanka (see section 1.2.1.2). In other words, they failed to see how these problems prevented the teachers from delivering effective lessons to their students. This study, by contextualising the various problems and challenges in the teaching and learning of English and the experiences of teachers about their English teaching efficacy, emphasizes the need for understanding the relationship between these two realities.

The following sections explain the rationale of this study under three aspects: the failure of ELT in Sri Lanka, problems related to the failure of ELT and the criticism levelled against teachers of English.

1.2.1.1 The failure of ELT in Sri Lanka

Even though the students in Sri Lanka learn English as a second language for several years in the school i.e., from primary to Advanced Level, their proficiency in English remains very low and most of the students find it difficult to express themselves in simple and correct English (De Mel, 2007; Premalal, *ibid.*). This study which was conducted with teachers and students in Jaffna, seeks to understand why, especially when, the activity based oral English is introduced

nationally to students in Grades One and Two (age seven and eight), the formal instruction of the English language curriculum begins at Grade Three (age nine) and continues until students leave the school at the end of Grade Thirteen (age nineteen), and English as a second language is included as one of the main subjects in the daily timetable.

Two factors indicate the failure or the minimal success of the English language programme in Sri Lankan schools: one is that only a minority of the student population is able to achieve a desirable grade at the state examination. The Northern Education System Review (NESR) (2014) shows that only thirty-three per cent of students scored credit⁴ or a higher grade in the 2012 G.C.E. O/L English examination in the district of Jaffna. The percentage would be higher if students with ordinary pass are included. Another survey carried out by Student Sri Lanka Educational Network (2010) shows that only twenty-eight per cent of the whole student populace passed English language in the 2009 G.C.E. O/L. The NESR (ibid.) also says that according to the Ministry of Education, subject-wise, the highest number of fail grades among students in Sri Lanka was for English language in the 2013 G.C.E O/L. The report said that fifty-two per cent of students failed the English language examination. Hence student underperformance in English education is a problem found not only in Jaffna but also throughout Sri Lanka.

The second factor is that the majority of Sri Lankan youth do not possess the required English proficiency to compete in the private sector oriented job market. The World Bank (2006: 57) reports, 'Only 10 percent of children of the public system achieve a targeted level of mastery in English language skills.' Wijewardene et al. (2014) report that there have been recurring complaints from employers in Sri Lanka that business graduates lack proficiency in English; though they were ready for the work in respect of their subject

4. Sri Lankan O/L grading system has five grades: A = Distinction; B = Very Good Pass; C = Credit Pass; S = Ordinary Pass and W= Failure.

knowledge, they lack the proficiency of English language skills especially spoken skills. Herath and Ranasinghe (2011) investigated sixty-five private sector business firms in Sri Lanka to know how these firms assessed English language proficiency of their graduate employees. They found that fifty-four per cent of the firms reported that the English proficiency of the business graduates was unsatisfactory.

1.2.1.2 Problems related to the failure of English language teaching (ELT) in Sri Lanka

Many studies (Fernando and Mallawa, 2003; Hettiarachchi, 2010; Karunaratne, 2008; Perera, 2006; Perera et al., 2010; Perera, 2001; Wijsekera, 2012) have dealt with various problems and challenges related to the failure of ELT in Sri Lanka. However despite these studies, problems related to ELT remain. Section 1.5 explains why another study covering these issues is needed.

For this introductory purpose, this section outlines some of the problems related to ELT in general (see Chapter Three for more detail).

Most of the literature refer to several classroom issues that affect ELT in Sri Lanka. English is one of the main subjects in GCE (O/L), however, a pass in English is not considered compulsory to study GCE (A/L). English is taught as an additional subject in GCE (A/L) but, again a pass in A/L English is not necessary to enter university. As studying English at O/L or A/L is not considered a priority for students it is not unusual to find students in Sri Lanka who are not motivated to learn English as a subject on the national curriculum or teachers who are not motivated to teach English as a second language (Canagarajah, 1993; Perera, 2006; Karunaratne, 2009; Hettiarachchi, 2010; Perera et al, 2010).

The single textbook option is another main problem in ELT in Sri Lanka (Mosback, 1984, 1990; Wickrema and Colenso, 2003). The government of Sri Lanka issues free textbooks for every subject for all students throughout the country from Grade One to Eleven (up to O/L). Unfortunately the government maintains a single textbook scheme which provides only one specific textbook for each subject for the whole student populace and it is not differentiated by student ability. Therefore students with different academic abilities have to use the same

textbook and teachers struggle to handle students of varied levels of learning abilities with a single type of textbook (Perera et al., *ibid.*). The motivation of the teachers of English is greatly affected as they cannot find a textbook suitable to the varied proficiency levels of their students (Hettiarachchi, *ibid.*).

There is another problem which is a mismatch between the English teaching materials and the style of examinations (Perera, 2001; Karunaratne, 2008). With the introduction of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)⁵ in the second language teaching in the 1980s, the English language teaching (ELT) enterprise around the world started using learning materials based on the CLT approach (see Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Though the government of Sri Lanka gradually adopted this teaching approach and published the necessary textbooks which are more communicative in nature, the English language exams conducted by the Sri Lankan Ministry of Education tests only the reading and writing skills of students, not their listening and speaking skills (Rathnasena et al, 2013). Thus teachers just prepare their students for the exam without making the maximum use of the textbook. Further, the teachers who come from social or academic backgrounds with less familiarity of the English language lack the English proficiency to conduct CLT and consequently they, along with their students, over depend on their mother tongue in the language classroom which impairs oral interaction in the target language necessary for its acquisition (Karunaratne, 2008).

Teachers also face problems such as overcrowded⁶ classrooms and a lack of

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5. CLT is meant to develop learners' communicative competence in contrast to their grammatical competence of the language. The communicative competence includes the knowledge of what to say and how say it according to the situations, the speakers and their roles and intentions (see detailed description in section ii. a) of 2.3.1.1).
 6. Sri Lankan classrooms generally accommodate around thirty students. However certain 1AB or National Schools (see *Table 2/Chapter Two – Types of Schools in Sri Lanka*) have classrooms with forty or even more than forty students, and as such they are considered overcrowded.

resources and facilities in some schools (Hettiarachchi, *ibid.*). When there is an excess number of students in the classroom, teachers find it difficult to maintain order in the classroom and in addition the noise from overcrowded neighbouring classrooms greatly deprives students of a quiet learning environment.

Teachers find it difficult to deliver effective English lessons due to the lack of necessary English material resources in the classroom; the available materials become scarce when they are shared among large numbers of students in the classroom.

Besides the above mentioned classroom problems, there are also socio-economic and political problems which contribute to the failure of English language teaching (ELT). According to Karunaratne (2009) students from rural areas because of the low income of their parents are deprived of additional opportunities such as private tuition to learn more English. The social status of students also influences their learning; Perera (2006) argues that poor social status and living conditions of students instil in them a motivational deficit in learning. This is because of the psychological impact made on them by their poverty. Perera contends that students from low income backgrounds develop an attitude that their low status in the society prevents them from moving upward in the social and educational ladder.

The political problems which greatly contribute to the ineffectiveness of ELT include the uneven distribution of resources (MoE, 2004) and qualified teachers (Liyanage, 2013) among schools, teacher transfers from rural to urban areas through political interference in placing teachers in particular schools and corruptions in the education system (Research Report, 2009). Socio-economic and political problems are discussed in greater detail throughout the thesis.

1.2.1.3 Criticism against teachers of English

Though the aforementioned problems and challenges significantly contribute to the failure of ELT and poor student performance in English, it was the experience of the researcher and his colleagues (*cf.* 1.2.1) as teachers of English that they

were unduly blamed for the underperformance or the failure of students in English learning. School principals, resource personnel of English language teaching (ELT) and retired teachers of English have complained that teachers of English did not teach the English language effectively (Sumanasekera, *ibid.*; Premalal, *ibid.*). The criticism against teachers sometimes accompanied comparison between the poor performance of their students, mostly in many low-performing schools, and the excellent performance of students from a few leading or high-performing schools. Thus they were indirectly accused of providing less effective teaching of English while the teachers of a few leading schools were commended for the success of their students in English learning. This generally happened when teachers attended seminars at the Department of Education after the O/L exam results were out. In such situations teachers became frustrated that the authorities failed to understand how various classroom and other problems related to ELT affected the effectiveness of the lessons they conducted. Hence, the current research seeks to understand how various problems related to ELT affected the teaching efficacy of the teachers of English.

1.3 Understanding the current study through attribution theory

The rationale outlined in the previous section shows that there are two main concerns informing the current study. One is the blame or criticism levelled at current teachers of English by principals, ELT resource personnel and retired teachers of English. These groups attributed the underperformance of students in learning English to a lack of effectiveness in English teaching. The other concern is the attribution of blame by current teachers of English in general in Jaffna as a response to the blame they received. As said in the introduction of this chapter the researcher during his English teaching experience in Jaffna found that the teachers of English in general became frustrated at the blame they experienced from others. Reacting to the blame directed at them, they in turn blamed various classroom problems that they claimed affected their teaching efficacy.

A question naturally arising here is why it is that while others attributed blame for the failure of students in learning English to factors internal to teachers (teacher effectiveness), the teachers themselves blamed external factors (classroom

problems)? Another question also can be raised here particularly towards the principals and resource personnel of English: Why do principals and resource personnel blame the lack of effectiveness of the teachers in teaching English (which is external to them) instead of considering factors internal to them (which may also have contributed to students' underperformance in learning English)? For example, a principal fails to provide necessary feedback (which is internal to him/her) to a teacher which is likely to result in poor teaching.

In the next section attribution theory is used to explore how people understand their own behaviours in relation to the outcome to their actions and also how people understand a person's behaviours in relation to the outcome of that person's actions. Consequently this section explores why the current teachers of English blame causes external to them (rather than their teaching efficacy), and the principals, resource personnel and retired teachers of English blame the current teachers of English (rather than themselves) for the lack of English language proficiency amongst school students.

1.3.1 Meaning of the term *attribution*

Before understanding the basic tenets of attribution theory, it is useful to consider the meaning of the term *attribution*. 'An attribution is a causal explanation for an event or behaviour' (Harvey and Martinko, 2016: 147). For example if a nurse observes a colleague performing a procedure incorrectly on a patient, she is likely to make an attributional explanation for this behaviour. She might conclude that her colleague was poorly trained. Thus the nurse who is the observer attributes the behaviour of her colleague to having insufficient skills (ibid.). In the same manner, people also form attributions for their own actions. For example, a student might attribute his or her success in an exam to his or her intelligence or hard work.

1.3.2 Attribution theory

Attribution theory was developed from the theories of social psychologists: Fritz Heider, Edward Jones, Keith Davis, and Harold Kelley. Heider first wrote about attribution theory in his book *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relationships*

(1958) and the others worked on the theory in the following decades (Harvey and Martinko, 2016).

Attribution theory is about ‘how people come to explain the causes of their behaviour and those around them’ (Amaral, 2011: 1) or ‘how people perceive each other in interaction and especially how they make sense of each other’s behaviour’ (Malle, 2011: 73). According to Malle (ibid.), Heider found that perceiving persons in social interactions was more complex than perceiving inanimate objects, because of the manifold observational data available and the various causes (e.g. beliefs, desires, emotions, traits) to which these data can be attributed. He perceived persons as action centres and said that they can intentionally benefit or harm others and they have abilities, wishes and sentiments. Heider argued that with the help of others’ intentionality, the inference of wishes, sentiments and purposes perceivers find meaning to others’ behaviours (ibid.). ‘Attribution is, therefore, a judgment embedded in the point of view of the perceiver and subject to the epistemic state [the knowledge about others’ behaviour] of that perceiver’ (Tomai and Forbus, 2007: 1).

Social psychologists developed attribution theory as a means of dealing with questions which required social perception. Hence its purpose is to know how people make causal explanations or how they answer questions beginning with ‘why?’ Heider (1958) explained this situation by arguing that ‘all people are “naïve psychologists” who have an innate desire to understand the causes of behaviours and outcomes’ (Harvey and Martinko, 2016: 148). Harvey and Martinko (2016) contend that, as the examples above suggest, the attribution process is something automatic and very familiar to people in their daily lives though they do not notice it and/or cannot account for their actions.

‘We’re constantly told we shouldn’t judge others. Attribution theory says we can’t help it’ (Griffin, Ledbetter and Sparks, 2014:137).

Heider (1958) made his first argument in social psychology that people tend to place more weight on internal reasons for success but place more weight on external factors when they fail.

This theory states that when an individual has a negative experience, or make a mistake, they will attribute the cause to something external. Others,

however, will attribute the cause to something internal, something inherent in the individual's internal locus of control (Amaral, 2011: 1).

Heider distinguished between internal and external attributions, arguing that both personal forces and environmental factors of people operate on them and the balance of these determines the attribution of responsibility (Lewis and Daltroy, 1990). For example, the principals, resource personnel of English language teaching (ELT) and retired teachers of English (who influenced my decision to undertake this doctoral study) attributed the causes of the underperformance of students in learning English to something *internal* to the teachers of English i.e., the teachers' way of teaching the lesson was considered not effective.

However, as said above the researcher had a prior experience with the teachers of English in the educational contexts of Jaffna that they themselves attributed the causes for the underperformance of students to something *external* to them i.e., various classroom problems. Drawing on Heider it is possible to argue, that these teachers of English tended to place more weight on external factors (classroom problems) for their failure in teaching English to their students effectively.

According to attribution theory many factors such as our view of the world, our prior experience with a particular person or situation, our knowledge of the behaviour and our own interpretation of events play an important role in how we assign attributes to behaviours (Heffner, 2014). For example, the principals, retired teachers of English and resource personnel of ELT referred to above, in order to make the correct attribution, needed to consider many factors related to the current teachers of English that may cause the low performance of their students' learning of English. Harvey and Martinko (2016) state that 'as with all perceptions, attributions are not always an accurate reflection of the reality!' (p. 149 – emphasis in original). Heffner (2014) explains two kinds of errors or mistakes which people tend to make when assigning attributes to others and themselves: Fundamental Attribution Error (Heider, 1958) and Self-Serving Bias (Miller and Ross, 1975). These are discussed next.

1.3.3 Fundamental Attribution Error and Self-Serving Bias

Buahin (2012) says that fundamental attribution error occurs when individuals overestimate personal factors and underestimate external or situational factors to explain others' behaviour. This is supported by Heffner who contends:

Fundamental Attribution Error refers to the tendency to overestimate the internal and underestimate the external factors when explaining the behaviours of others. This may be a result of our tendency to pay more attention to the situation rather than to the individual and is especially true when we know little about the other person (Heffner, 2014: 1).

In self-serving bias, the person tends to equate successes to internal factors such as his or her ability or efforts and attributes failures to external factors (Heffner, *ibid.*; Sanjuan and Magallares, 2014). Hence self-serving bias helps individuals to give themselves credit for the good outcomes that happen (Buahin, 2012).

According to attribution theory, in situations where individuals are themselves involved, they tend not to blame themselves for their failures but, rather, blame external factors. For example, a head teacher may not blame his/her poor leadership of his/her school for children not gaining the required qualifications, but instead blame the lack of student achievement on a lack of parental interest in their children's performance. However, where the situation relates to others (i.e. when the head teacher focuses on his/her teaching staff), there is an over-emphasis on blaming others' attributes when things go wrong rather than seeing that external factors are also implicated. For example, the head teacher will be quick to blame the teachers and/or over emphasise the weaknesses he/she attributes to the teachers when children fail their exams or results are lower than the year before, instead of trying to understand the external factors which have contributed to the students' lower performance or underachievement.

Heffner's explanation can be used to shed light on the behaviour of the principals, resource personnel of English language teaching and retired teachers of English in blaming the Sri Lankan teachers of English for their lack of effectiveness in teaching English. The former were inclined to blame the attributes of their own teachers when students failed to learn English well, rather than also pinning the blame on the relevant external factors (e.g. classroom problems and other related

socio-economic and political problems) encountered by the latter. They tended to blame the teachers for children not learning English effectively instead of seeking to understand and blame the external factors which contributed to the difficulties encountered by the children in their acquisition of English.

Following Heider's line of argument it could be argued that the educational authorities were predisposed to pay more attention to the situation of student performance rather than to the various classroom problems which the teachers faced as individuals. This is because schools locally and nationally are judged by student performance and student performance is used to compare schools and make judgements about the ability of teachers.

The current teachers of English attributed the failure of students in learning English to some external factors, but did not acknowledge the contribution of their personal lack of effective teaching to the failure. This was a self-serving bias. However, what others especially the principals and resource personnel of English language teaching (ELT) attributed to themselves also reflected the self-serving bias. The principals and resource personnel of ELT have a part to play in the success of students in learning English as a second language. There are many factors which can contribute to the success of students such as proper teacher development, appropriate textbooks given to students, sufficient numbers of teachers being provided in schools through proper teacher deployment and so on. As long as these factors are managed by the principals, resource personnel of ELT and other authorities, they can be considered something internal to them. According to self-serving bias of attribution theory, the principals and resource personnel of ELT attributed an external factor (lack of effectiveness in teaching English) to the failure of students instead of attributing any factors which were internal to them.

1.3.4 Weiner's attribution model

Among the psychologists who developed Fritz Heider's study of attribution, Bernard Weiner is significant as he developed it into a more comprehensive and extensive model of human attribution. His model is more used in research on student learning (Anderman and Anderman, 2009). Weiner explains how learners form causal beliefs in matters related to their learning (Weiner, 2005, 2012).

A basic assumption of Weiner's model of attribution is that learners are affected by both environmental factors (e.g., characteristics of the students' home or school) and by personal factors (e.g., prior experiences and prior knowledge). These background variables affect the types of attributions that individuals are likely to make (Anderman & Anderman, 2009: 1).

Learners make an attributional search when there is an achievement-related event such as failing in an examination. They search for the cause of their failure. The perceived cause is very important to the learners as it will affect their future motivation when they engage with similar events. For example a student who attributes his/her exam failure to his/her own lack of ability will have a different level of motivation in future examinations than the one who attributes his/her failure to inexperienced teachers (*ibid.*).

According to Weiner, four important factors such as ability, effort, task difficulty and luck determine the attributions we make (Weiner, 1986, 2012; Weiten, 2015). However, the characteristics (internal or external, stable or unstable etc.) of the attribution are more important than the mere attribution we make (effort, luck etc.). Weiner classified the characteristics of the attribution along three causal dimensions: locus of control, stability and controllability. These causal dimensions are important as they affect learners' subsequent motivation toward task or activity (Anderman and Anderman, 2009).

Locus of control (place of control) refers to one's belief that his or her behaviour is guided by external (such as luck, fate, etc.) or internal (such as ability and effort) factors (Fiske and Taylor, 1991). If a learner attributes his/her success in an exam to his/her ability or effort, then he/she chooses an internal cause because the ability or the effort is internal to a learner. However, if he/she believes that his/her failure is due to his/her teacher's incompetence, then he/she attributes

his/her failure to an external cause, because his/her teacher's incompetence is external to him/her (Anderman and Anderman, 2009).

Stability refers to how likely it is the probability of causes will change over time (Fiske and Taylor, 1991). For example, a male student failed his math test, but he attributed the failure to his illness during the exam. The student might consider this situation unstable because his illness is a temporary cause. In contrast, if he failed because of his lack of ability in math, then his cause is stable (if he believes that his ability is a permanent quality) (Anderman and Anderman, 2009).

According to Weiner, stability is directly related to one's expectancy for success (Weiner, 1986).

The final dimension of Weiner's (1986) model, which is controllability, explains about the control of a person over the situation. A person may have little control over the situation, or the situation may be in the person's control (Fiske and Taylor, 1991). If a runner thinks that he/she lost the race because of a lack of practice before the competition, the cause is controllable because he/she could have practised more. In contrast, if he/she believes that the loss was due to the lack of ability as a runner, then the cause is uncontrollable (Anderman and Anderman, 2009). Control influences one's affect (or feeling/emotion) toward the situation or behaviour. Hence, the runner who lost the race because of their lack of ability may not make time to practice well for the race in the future as he/she perceives the situation to be unchanging and uncontrollable, and wonders why he/she should be bothered unnecessarily (Hurst, nd).

Weiner's model can be explained further through figure 1 below. Ability is considered an internally perceived locus but out of the control (or permanent) of the individual. For example, one may think he or she was born with the ability to be a good dancer and another may think he or she can never sing well because they do not have the talent for singing. Task difficulty is also attributed as no control, but is perceived as external as it is assigned by someone outside. Effort and luck are perceived as unstable (or temporary) while the former is internal and the latter is external.

Figure 1: Weiner's (1986) original attribution model

	Internal		External	
	<i>Stable</i>	<i>Unstable</i>	<i>Stable</i>	<i>Unstable</i>
Uncontrollable	Ability		Task Difficulty	Luck
Controllable		Effort		

Weiner's model also indicates that certain emotional responses are associated with various causal dimensions (Weiner, 2006). For example, in relation to the locus dimension, a student is likely to experience a sense of pride in passing their exam if he/she believes that the cause is due to his/her internal behaviour (e.g. effort) or experience relaxation when the success is attributed to some external causes (e.g. luck). In relation to the stability dimension, people may have feelings of hopefulness or hopelessness. Where there is success because of ability which is internal to a person, the person is hopeful about future success. However, when failure is attributed to the difficulty level of the task which is external to the doer, he/she becomes hopeless about future success. In the controllability dimension, a student may experience guilt if he/she believes that his/her failure was caused by a controllable factor such as lack of effort or is likely to experience the feeling of shame if his failure was due to an uncontrollable cause such as a lack of ability (Anderman and Anderman, 2009).

Finally, Weiner's model posits that the people who undergo this attributional process may have behavioural consequences in them. For example, a student's decision to study science harder in future may be partially determined by their attribution for failure on previous science examinations (Anderman & Anderman, *ibid.*).

Though Weiner's model of attribution is primarily associated with students' motivation and learning, it can be drawn on to help explain the problem of the current study which is mainly related to Sri Lankan teachers of English teaching

efficacy. Thus the success or failure of students in learning English can be related to the ability or the efforts of the teachers as students' performance in the exam is related to their ability or efforts. Further Weiner's model can also explain emotional responses of the teachers of English following their success or failure in teaching English to their students. It is also possible to explain the behavioural changes of the teachers of English following the attributions they make for their behaviours.

Given that blame is central to the arguments posed by the principals, retired teachers of English and resource personnel of ELT, and a number of factors can contribute to student failure and not just a lack of teacher effectiveness it was considered salient to provide an overview of attribution theory in this first chapter as it offers insight into how and why teachers might be blamed for poor student performance. The relevance of attribution theory to the current study particularly based on the Weiner's model will be further discussed in Chapter Seven when the findings of the main study are analysed.

1.4 Aim and focus of the study

The current study aims to understand the perceptions of Sri Lankan teachers of English how various challenges and problems affected their English teaching efficacy in secondary schools in the district of Jaffna.

The research was conducted at the secondary level, because though English is taught from Grade One to Thirteen in Sri Lanka, only in the secondary level it is taught and examined (at O/L) as a core subject. Consequently, the English curriculum in the secondary level is given greater importance by students, teachers, parents, educational authorities and policy makers.

Hayes (2005) concluded that the experience of non-native speaking (NNS) teachers of English is scarce in the literature. He said that the experience of NNS teachers of English is invisible because the area of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in Sri Lanka is greatly under-researched as it (TESOL) 'has become a global industry with significant power imbalances

between NS (native speaking) and NNS' (p. 170). Hayes argues that one way of lessening the power imbalances is to make more visible the experiences of NNS through 'sponsoring of the teacher's voice' (quoted from Goodson, 1994: 31 in Hayes, *ibid*: 171). The current study was an attempt to give voice to teachers in the district of Jaffna so that their experiences of efficacy in teaching of English in the midst of various challenges could be heard and better understood.

1.5 Importance of the current study

While there is much literature on the problems and challenges which have contributed to the failure of English language teaching (ELT) in Sri Lanka, no previous study has recorded the perceptions of Sri Lankan teachers of how these problems have affected their English teaching efficacy. The current study is very important because, unlike other studies, it did not deal with problems of ELT at a simply descriptive level (Karunaratne, 2008; Perera et al., 2010; Perera, 2001), but rather dealt with the problems of ELT in relation to the teaching efficacy of the teachers of English in two different teaching contexts –high and low-performing schools.

The current study is also very important as it dealt with the problems of ELT in relation to an explanatory theory i.e., attribution theory. Besides approaching the problems of ELT from the points of view of the participants, the current study, by introducing attribution theory, also provides a different view to understand the perceptions and behaviour of the current teachers of English and other educational authorities involved in the study. It is particularly important as it will reveal new insights to understand the motivation of the teachers when teaching English. This is a new approach as far as the ELT studies in Sri Lanka is concerned.

Further, by studying how various problems affect the teaching efficacy of the teachers of English in Jaffna, the current study offers new insights of the teachers into their English teaching efficacy according to their teaching contexts. These new insights also provide new avenues for future investigations on the same area.

Another reason for the importance of the current study that it was conducted in Jaffna, the North of Sri Lanka which was severely affected by thirty years of civil war from the 1970s. The North and East of Sri Lanka where the minority Tamil community predominantly lives, were affected by the civil war more than the other parts of Sri Lanka where the majority Sinhalese community lives. The long period of war in Jaffna greatly affected various educational endeavours including access to teachers and educational resources and educational research being conducted to understand the educational needs and experiences of Tamil students and teachers. As the country is at peace and new developments in the economy, social life and education are taking place, the current study is important in understanding the quality of English language education provision which exists and what is required if the English language competency of Tamil students is to improve.

1.6 Efficacy and Effectiveness

At the outset it is salient to have an understanding of the terms used and how they are employed in this thesis. The term ‘efficacy’ which appears as ‘teacher efficacy’ in the field of education is different from ‘effectiveness’ or ‘teacher effectiveness’. Teacher efficacy has been described as “teachers’ beliefs in their abilities to affect student performance” (Dellinger et al., 2008, p. 753). It is defined as a teacher’s “judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of students’ engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated” (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001, p. 783) or as Hoy (2000) says, teacher efficacy is teachers’ confidence in their ability to promote students’ learning. However, regarding teacher effectiveness, Seidel and Shavelson (2007 as cited in Klassen and Tze, 2014) define it as “the aggregated effects of a complex set of in-classroom teacher behaviours on student learning” (p. 60). Hence teacher effectiveness can be understood as the result or the consequence of some observable behaviours (by another) such as planning and preparation of the teaching materials, managing the classroom environment and developing student learning through interactive instruction (Tournaki, Lyublinshaya & Carolan, 2009). In contrast, as the above literature suggests,

Coladarci (1992) says that teacher efficacy refers to one's beliefs rather than to observable behaviours. In trying to distinguish these two terms, Melby (2001) commented that “teacher efficacy is sometimes considered to be a general indicator or predictor of teaching effectiveness” (p. 5). In addition, Ross (2007) contends “more effective teaching should increase the likelihood of teachers obtaining mastery experiences, the strongest predictor of self-efficacy” (p.52).

The current study primarily explored observable teaching behaviours in English such as Jaffna teachers’ daily preparation of the English lesson or creative instruction of the lesson and so on (cf. Tournaki, Lyublinshaya, and Carolan, 2009) as the aspects of the effectiveness of the teachers. It is because, as said in the introduction above, the current research was informed by the teaching experience of the researcher in which the educational authorities blamed the teachers of English for their lack of teacher effectiveness which according to them was observed in the teaching of Sri Lankan teachers (see Chapter Six). Hence it was the original intention of the researcher to investigate how certain observable teacher behaviours of effective teaching were affected by various classroom and other problems. Consequently, the reader can find that much of the literature review (Chapter Four) has been dedicated to effective teaching of English.

However, though the effective teacher behaviours are subject to the observance of others (principals, retired teachers etc.), the perceptions of the current teachers of English on their own effective behaviours can be understood as their teacher or teaching efficacy (Cf. Dellinger et al., 2008; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001) which is actually different from teacher effectiveness. The current study also covered the beliefs of the teachers as it investigated what elements of effectiveness they identified and practiced in their own teaching. Further the current study adopted the position that as far as the teachers believed that those elements of effective teaching of English would bring about or lead to a change in student learning they can be considered as the sense of efficacy of the teachers. Consequently, the literature on teacher efficacy has been reviewed in Chapter Four to render a general understanding of the concept, theoretical perspectives of teacher efficacy, its relationship with positive teacher outcomes, student motivation and achievement and to provide insight into how it was interpreted and

used in this study. It was also found from the teaching experience of the researcher in Sri Lanka, particularly in Jaffna that ‘teaching efficacy’ was a concept hardly used among teachers and even among educational authorities.

Considering the aforementioned factors, the current study uses both terms, ‘teaching efficacy’ and ‘teacher effectiveness’, and the general distinction in understanding these concepts is being maintained throughout the thesis by using these terms in relation to relevant participants of the research. For example, the phrases *effective teaching of English* or *teacher effectiveness* are used in relation to the principals, retired teachers and resource personnel of English. They are used in this way because, in line with the meaning of teacher effectiveness given above (i.e., referring to observable classroom behaviours of the teachers to enhance students’ learning), the principals, retired teachers and resource personnel of English expected the current teachers of English to enhance students’ English learning through observable behaviours in the classroom. These observable behaviours (as stated in Chapter Six) include well prepared lessons, creative teaching, fulfilling students’ learning needs and so on. The principals and others believed that these classroom behaviours could be observed and used to judge the teacher effectiveness.

The current teachers of English who participated in this study had a different perspective. Unlike the principals, retired teachers and resource personnel of English, the current teachers of English considered the classroom behaviours (i.e., the prepared lessons or creative teaching which were proposed by the principals and others) as opportunities for them to express their underlying ability to affect students’ performance. According to the definition given by Dellinger et al. (2008: 753), “teachers’ beliefs in their abilities to affect student performance” is teacher efficacy. The phrases *teacher efficacy* or *teaching efficacy* are therefore used to capture the current teachers’ beliefs about their teaching.

The current teachers of English expressed their *perceptions or beliefs* concerning whether they were able to affect their students’ learning through those classroom behaviours proposed by the principals and others. Teachers who felt unable to affect student learning also talked about how Jaffna teachers’ beliefs in affecting

student learning were affected by various classroom and other related problems. Where the principals and others wanted to witness some classroom *behaviours* from the teachers (effectiveness), the latter wanted to express their *beliefs* whether they could affect students' learning through those classroom behaviours (efficacy).

1.7 Research questions

The study sought to address one main question and one sub-question. Since the performance of teachers with students of low performance in English was often compared with the performance of teachers with students of high performance, the following sub-research question was tackled in a preliminary study:

Are the teachers whose students perform very well in English providing more effective teaching to their students than the teachers whose students underperform in English?

The central research question which was tackled in the main study of the current research was,

How do the teachers of English (in **Jaffna**) perceive various classroom and other related problems (such as socio-economic and political issues which are **connected to the teachers' profession**) affected their English teaching efficacy?

The main research question was informed by the following preliminary study questions which sought to determine the operational criteria for the main study so that the researcher could approach the aforementioned central question of the research within a systematic framework.

1. What are the various classroom and related socioeconomic and political problems associated with the English language teaching (ELT) programme in the secondary schools in the district of Jaffna?
2. According to principals, retired teachers of English and resource personnel of ELT, what are the most needed aspects of effectiveness in teaching English in the secondary classrooms in the district of Jaffna?

The preliminary and main studies are detailed in the methodology chapter.

1.8 Participants and research instruments

The study participants were teachers and students who were teaching and learning English in the secondary level (Grades Six to Eleven) of state schools in the district of Jaffna, principals, resource personnel of English language teaching (ELT) and retired teachers of English.

The research instruments used in this study were questionnaires, interviews and lesson observations. The issues regarding the participants and research instruments are discussed in the methodology chapter.

1.9 Organisation of thesis

The following chapters have been organised to answer the above research questions.

Chapter two presents a detailed account on the context of general education and ELT in Sri Lanka.

Chapter three presents the problems associated with ELT in the mainstream education system of Sri Lanka; it reviews literature on various classroom, socioeconomic and political problems that accompany the teaching and learning of English in schools.

Chapter four reviews literature on effective teaching of English and teacher efficacy.

Chapter five outlines the methodology of the current research.

Chapters six and seven present and analyse the data gathered in the preliminary and main studies.

The concluding chapter reviews the research findings along with the contribution of the current study to knowledge and provides suggestions and recommendations for future considerations.

2. Education System and English Language Teaching (ELT) in Sri Lanka

Introduction

The central focus of this chapter is to present the current state of ELT in Sri Lanka: how teachers and students are teaching and learning English as a second language, what strategies they are using in the language classroom, what the latest developments in ELT in Sri Lanka are and how teachers are recruited and educated to teach English. This information is essential for the reader to understand the various problems and challenges related to ELT (cf. Chapter Three) and to interpret the views of the teachers (cf. Chapter Seven) as to how those problems affected their English teaching efficacy. Since ELT is a part of the general education system, the relevant areas of the education system particularly the issues related to the secondary school system (to which the current study is primarily connected) need to be presented first to gain a better understanding of the ELT context. However, an overview of the ethnographic, socio-economic and political context of Sri Lanka within which both these areas, i.e., the general education system and ELT, develop and function need to be laid out in order to present an overview of the research context. Hence this chapter discusses these issues under three sections: general context of Sri Lanka, general education in Sri Lanka and ELT in Sri Lanka.

2.1. General context of Sri Lanka

This section presents an overview of Sri Lanka which includes its geography, ethnography and a brief history. The history begins with the post-colonial era of the country as it is the period in which the general education of Sri Lanka was given a new foundation upon the recommendations of the special education committee (section 2.2) and started growing as an independent education system.

2.1.1 Geography of Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka, known as Ceylon⁷ until 1972, is situated eighteen miles (twenty-nine kilometers) off the south-eastern tip of the Indian sub-continent (SLG, 2003). It had been connected to the sub-continent on several occasions due to the fluctuations of the sea level (Deraniyagala 1992 in Deraniyagala, 1996). The location of Sri Lanka was important in the early days of its history as it lay in a strategic position on a sea trade route between China and the West. Sri Lanka is an island comparatively small in size; at its broadest points, it is 268 miles (432 km) long and 139 miles (224 km) wide (SLG, *ibid.*).

2.1.2 Ethnography of Sri Lanka

2.1.2.1 Major ethnic groups

Sri Lanka consists of diverse ethnic groups – Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim. According to the evidence found in the Chronicles of Lanka such as ‘Mahawamsa’ and ‘Dipavamsa’, during the period between 600 and 500 BC a Prince called Vijeya, the legendary founding father of the Sinhalese people (Pieris, 1992), arrived in Sri Lanka with his followers from North India.

He and his men settled along the river banks in the north-western region of Sri Lanka; Vijeya made an allegiance with the aborigines and became master of the country (Perera, 2007).

According to anthropological and archaeological evidences, the Tamils in Sri Lanka have been living there since around second century BC (Mahadevan, 2002). They are the descendants of people who migrated to Sri Lanka from South India (Nadarajan, 1999).

7. Ceylon was a Dominion in the Commonwealth of Nations between 1948 and 1972. In 1948, British Ceylon was granted independence as Ceylon. In 1972, Ceylon became a republic within the Commonwealth, and its name was changed to Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lankan Moors (commonly known as Muslims), predominantly followers of Islam form the third largest ethnic community in Sri Lanka. They claim their ancestry to Arab traders (Moors) who settled in the island some time between the eighth and fifteenth centuries (De Munck, 2005).

2.1.2.2 Population

The current population of Sri Lanka is 20.3 million with 3.7 million citizens living outside the country as migrants (DoCS, 2012) due to reasons such as marriage, employment, education and civil war displacement. The majority Sinhala community comprises seventy-four per cent of the total population. The minority Tamil community which comprises eighteen per cent of the people has two significant groups: the Sri Lankan Tamils who are descendants from South India; and the Indian Tamils most of whom are migrant workers brought to Sri Lanka by the British during their colonial rule. These Indian Tamils since they arrived have been living in the hill countries of Sri Lanka and working in tea and rubber estates. The Muslims, another minority group form seven per cent of the population. There are other minor groups which form less than one per cent of the population; they are Veddhas, regarded as the aborigines of the country and Burghers, a community of mixed European descents, Portuguese and Dutch.

2.1.2.3 Language and religion

The pointers of identity among the main ethnic groups in Sri Lanka are language and religion. Sinhala, an Indo-Aryan language is used by the Sinhalese as their mother tongue. The majority of the Sinhalese (seventy out of seventy-four per cent) follow Buddhism as their religion which was introduced to Sri Lanka in the third century BC (Perera, *ibid.*).

The Tamils, the majority of whom are Hindus speak the Dravidian language, Tamil. They are closely connected with the culture of the neighbouring Tamil Nadu of India. The Muslims speak Tamil and are strong adherents of Islam. The followers of Christianity who form about seven per cent of the population are from among the Sinhala, Tamil and Burgher communities. The ethnic groups and religions are set out below on *table 1*.

Table 1: Sri Lankan ethnic groups and religions

Ethnic groups		Religions	
Sinhalese	74%	Buddhists	70%
Tamils	18%	Hindus	16%
Muslims	07%	Christians	07%
Other communities	01%	Muslims (Islam)	07%

2.1.2.4 Location

North and East of Sri Lanka is predominantly occupied by Tamils (Sri Lankan Tamil) who consider these areas to be their homeland. The Northern Province is fully inhabited by Tamils whereas in the Eastern Province a significant percentage of Sinhalese and the majority of Muslims can be found. The Southern, Western and the Central Provinces of Sri Lanka are heavily populated by Sinhalese along with Tamils and Muslims as minority groups. A small percentage of Sinhalese and Muslims who were living in the North for a long time moved to other parts of the country in the 1980s and early 1990s due to the civil war which lasted about thirty years. After the final Sri Lankan war in May 2009 the presence of Sinhalese and Muslims in the North started emerging gradually. At present Sinhalese and Muslims together form about six per cent of the population of the North of Sri Lanka (DoCS, 2011).

2.1.3 Post-colonial and contemporary Sri Lanka

2.1.3.1 Post-colonial history

Sri Lankan independence was granted in 1948 but it remained a Dominion of the British Empire until it assumed the status of a Republic in 1972. A constitution was introduced in 1978 which made the Executive President the head of state (De Silva, 1981). The independent government had a strong national commitment to education which helped the country to achieve one of the highest literacy rates in South East Asia and better educational enrolment and equality of educational opportunity (Unicef, 2013b) than had existed during the colonial period.

Since independence to date, the striking event of Sri Lankan history was the dispute over the equality of two major ethnic communities, the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority, and the consequent civil war. The communal riot in Colombo in 1983 was the event which marked a turning point in the civil war through an armed struggle. The seed of enmity for the communal riots was sown in the following decades of independence as a result of the Sinhala government failure to give equal rights to the Tamils which very much affected their socioeconomic, cultural and political life. Repeated protests by Tamil leaders were not properly answered by the government but suppressed instead by military forces. Adding to this, the government introduced a 'standardisation'⁸ policy which made the university admission criteria for Tamil youth more difficult. All this led the Tamil leaders to idealise a separate land (North and East provinces where Tamils predominantly live) for Tamils as a permanent solution for all their problems. Hence the Tamil youth attempted to actualise the ideology through an armed struggle. The final war which suppressed the armed struggle of Tamils took place in 2009 and cost thousands of innocent lives. During this thirty years of civil war, the normal life of people in the North and East was very much curtailed with destruction of human life, property, houses, schools, hospitals and religious places; displacement of people within the country; denial of basic facilities through economic blockade by the government and the refuge of tens of thousands of people outside Sri Lanka which resulted in a Tamil diaspora in Canada, the UK, Australia and other western countries.

8. In 1972, the government of Sri Lanka introduced a district quota system as a parameter within each language. According to this, Sinhalese students who were the majority in most of the districts were able to get more seats than Tamil students in the universities.

2.1.3.2 Post-conflict Sri Lanka (from 2009 to date)

Post-conflict Sri Lanka has experienced a growth in infrastructure of the country, rehabilitation of people in war affected areas, an increase in economic investment by foreign countries and an increase in tourism. However, the government has been reluctant to seek a permanent solution to the ethnic problems and hence the discrimination experienced by the different ethnic communities has continued, along with unusual military presence in the North and East provinces (including Jaffna where this research took place) and consequent military interference in the normal life including education of the people, disorder in enforcing laws and an increase of crimes. As a result of the loss of thousands of innocent people in the final war in 2009, the Sri Lankan government now faces from the international community allegations of crimes against humanity (Keerawella, 2013).

2.2 General Education in Sri Lanka

The current general education system in Sri Lanka can be considered as the fruit of a comprehensive education ordinance enacted in 1939 and the important recommendations given by a special committee in 1943 when Sri Lanka was still under British rule.

The recommendations of the committee were:

- Education should be free from the kindergarten to the university.
- Local languages, Tamil and Sinhala should be made the medium of instruction in the primary school.
- English should be taught as a second language in all schools from Grade Three upward.
- Compulsory education should be from five to sixteen years of age.

(Wijenayaka, 2003)

Along with these recommendations, the national education reforms particularly which were implemented in 1972 and 1997 and certain events contributed to the outcome of the current education system. Among many events a few can be stated for example,

- introduction of the Sinhala-only language policy in 1956 which declared the Sinhala language as the official language of Sri Lanka (later Tamil was included in 1979) (Ross and Savenda, 1988)
- take-over of schools in 1961 to stop the establishment of schools ‘by denominational bodies in competition which resulted in a lack of planning, duplication and waste of resources’ (MoE, 2013: 15)
- establishment of National Colleges of Education in 1985 to train pre-service teachers (2.3.2.2) (Samaraweera, 2011)
- establishment of the National Institute of Education in 1985 for teacher education and curriculum development (2.3.2.2.) (ibid.)

The relevant information of these and other events and educational reforms will be referred to later in this research when the need arises. Knowing the characteristics of the education system is important in understanding the impact they have on the teaching efficacy of the teachers of English, and this is explored further below.

2.2.1 Characteristics of the education system

Research (Karunaratne, 2009; Rubasinghe, 1990; Little, 2010; Canagarajah, *ibid.*; Liyanage, *ibid.*; Manoharan, 2002) inevitably conveys two characteristics of the Sri Lankan education system: unequal provision of education and its politicised nature.

2.2.1.1. Unequal provision of education

The assurance to all citizens of the right to universal and the equal access to education at all levels (MoE, 2004) is the goal of the education system in Sri Lanka. However, the educational policies implemented to achieve this goal did not adequately produce a completely equitable system of education (Karunaratne, *ibid.*) as it allows public and private education which reinforces educational inequality as illustrated below.

i. Education by public and private sectors

There are ninety-eight private fee-levying schools (SLEI, 2012) and 9,931 government funded schools (MoE, 2013) in Sri Lanka. Though the number of private schools is a very small percentage compared to the total number of government schools, as fee-levying schools, they attract the children of affluent parents who generally have a better educational background and considerable competency in English. As a result, when the children of these affluent parents come together for learning they usually acquire higher competency in English than the students in the government schools (Balac and Aamot, 1999 in Karunaratne, *ibid.*). Furthermore, international schools which were established in the 1990s provide the English medium education to students and also prepare them for UK London examinations. Hence these fee-levying schools provide a better English education to the students of the affluent or the upper social classes (Karunaratne, *ibid.*).

ii. Types of schools catering to the social class background of students

The type of school (explained below) a student attends in Sri Lanka is largely determined by his/her social class background (Rubasinghe, *ibid.*). Affluent parents prefer to send their children to 1AB schools as the students in these schools show better performance in public examinations. This is because of better facilities and more qualified teachers available in these schools (Koelmeyer, 1990 in Karunaratne, *ibid.*). The National Schools, a sub category within the provincial 1AB schools, also attract the children from more affluent backgrounds as these schools are considered more prestigious with more physical and teacher resources (Balac and Aamot, *ibid.*, in Karunaratne, *ibid.*). The other types of schools accommodate mostly the children from less affluent backgrounds both from the urban and rural areas.

a. Types of schools

Table 2 displays the types of schools in the Sri Lankan education system. There are four different types of schools (1AB, 1C, II and III). As explained in *Table 2*, schools are categorised under these types in relation to the Grades and the

availability of different streams of subjects. More details on the characteristics of the different types of schools can be found in *Table 1.4* of Appendix-1.

Table 2. Types of schools in Sri Lanka

Types	Classes/Grades in each type of school
1AB	Schools with classes up to Advanced Level (A/L) in all streams including Science (1AB schools have a sub-category called the National Schools)
1C	Schools with classes up to Advanced Level (A/L) in Arts and Commerce streams
II	Schools with classes from Grade One to Grade Eleven Ordinary Level (O/L)
III	Primary schools from Grade One to Five (some schools include Grades Six, Seven and Eight)

(MoE, 2004).

iii. Urban-Rural dichotomy in the education system

A further division in the education system is the urban-rural dichotomy (Karunaratne, *ibid.*). While the urban schools are equipped with necessary material resources, sufficient number of teachers and various other facilities, the rural schools are generally deprived of them (discussed below) (Rubasinghe, *ibid.*). Baker (1988 in Karunaratne, *ibid.*) identifies two important problems that disadvantage the rural schools: one is poverty and the other is traditional or negative attitudes to education for example that the rural schools are suitable only to students of poor socio-economic backgrounds or students with lower learning abilities in rural schools cannot do well in their education. According to Baker, the poverty of the rural school environment leads to inadequate physical facilities in the school, while the negative attitudes to education and students makes the high-ranking educational officers, principals and teachers think that the poor are

not worthy of a good education. This kind of opinion results in a lack of qualified teachers in the rural schools (Rupasinghe, 1985 in Karunaratne, *ibid.*), rapid teacher transfers from rural to urban schools and a high level of teacher absenteeism (Canagarajah, *ibid.*).

2.2.1.2 Politicised nature of education

With the establishment of the Provincial Councils in 1987, considerable powers for planning and implementation were devolved to provincial Ministries of Education and Departments of Education, while the central ministry continued to have some forms of educational planning. The provincial ministries and departments grew in size and power and consequently there were ambiguities of role, function and authority (Little, *ibid.*).

Notwithstanding some curbing of political influence in the work of the education bureaucracy and schools in the early 1980s, devolution in 1987 increased the number of politicians and bureaucrats at the provincial level and multiplied the opportunities for political interference at the provincial level many times over (*ibid.*, p. 15).

To remedy the aforementioned setbacks, the National Education Commission (NEC) published proposals for a National Policy Framework on General Education in Sri Lanka in 2003 which emphasized the necessity of a political will at the highest level (Little, *ibid.*). The NEC proposals were never discussed in the parliament and political interference still continues in the education system. According to Karunaratne (2009) “this politicization affects the curriculum, teaching profession and even improvement of school conditions making it very difficult for teachers and students to keep up with the [education] changes” (Karunaratne, *ibid.*:17). This is supported by Perera et al. (2004 in Save the Children, 2010: 7) who observed that:

The ruling party in Sri Lanka retains control of the education system, and changes in educational policy are associated with a change in government. Ministers have been known to change the direction of education policy in line with their own political or personal agendas. The appointment of

Ministers, administrators and teachers is often politically motivated, and leads to issues of quality in the system, in teaching and in examinations.

2.2.1.3 Impacts of above characteristics on the context of the study

The fact that some portion of the student populace in certain prestigious 1AB and National Schools perform better while the majority of students in small or rural schools underperform in learning English (Result Analysis – O/L, 2011) is the result of the unequal provision of Education in the country. The students who perform well in the public examination tend to be concentrated mainly in a few private or semi-private schools, National and 1AB state schools. These schools have better facilities and sufficient numbers of qualified teachers which consequently provide a small percentage of students with unequal opportunities in education.

The politicised nature of education is one of the reasons for the unequal provision of Education in Sri Lanka. The interference of politicians in teacher transfers from rural to urban areas or teacher deployment and appointments of principals and other educational authorities (TISL, 2009) are likely to favour the better-off or the prestigious schools. Consequently, the students in small or rural schools are affected by the shortage of qualified teachers. When teachers with no political influence find it difficult to get transfers they become less motivated and committed in their teaching (Balasooriya, 2013). Further, the politicized nature of education caused frequent changes of the curriculum (Sumanasekera, 2010) and the introduction of new education programmes without proper piloting, for example the bilingual education (see explanation in section i. of 2.3.1.2) or the English as a life-skill programme (see explanation in section ii. of 2.3.1.2) (Sumathy, 2011) affected the motivation of students and teachers as they found it difficult to cope with changes in the education system.

2.2.2 Education network (current education system)

With the establishment of provincial councils in 1987 (2.2.1.2), the central government transferred control of government schools, with the exception of certain elite schools that had been designated as National Schools by the Ministry

of Education in 1985. The government continues to designate certain schools as National Schools as they come under criteria such as reasonable academic standard, number of students, facilities etc. (De Silva, 2009). Hence, schools in Sri Lanka come under the control of both the central government and the provincial councils with some responsibilities lying with the former and the latter having autonomy over others.

The executive authority of the central government is vested in the Ministry of Education which is responsible for national policies, national plans, teacher education, higher education, maintaining the standard and assuring the quality of all schools. It has important national level institutions such as the Department of Examinations, Department of Educational Publications, National Institute of Education etc. which are responsible for various functions in the education system. The provincial councils manage all provincial schools and have authority to legislate on the subjects allotted to the provinces. There are nine provincial councils in Sri Lanka. Each province has been divided into a number of Educational Zones. A zone is further divided into divisions (or clusters) being looked after by divisional officers (MoE, 2004). *Figure 2* illustrates the education network of Sri Lanka.

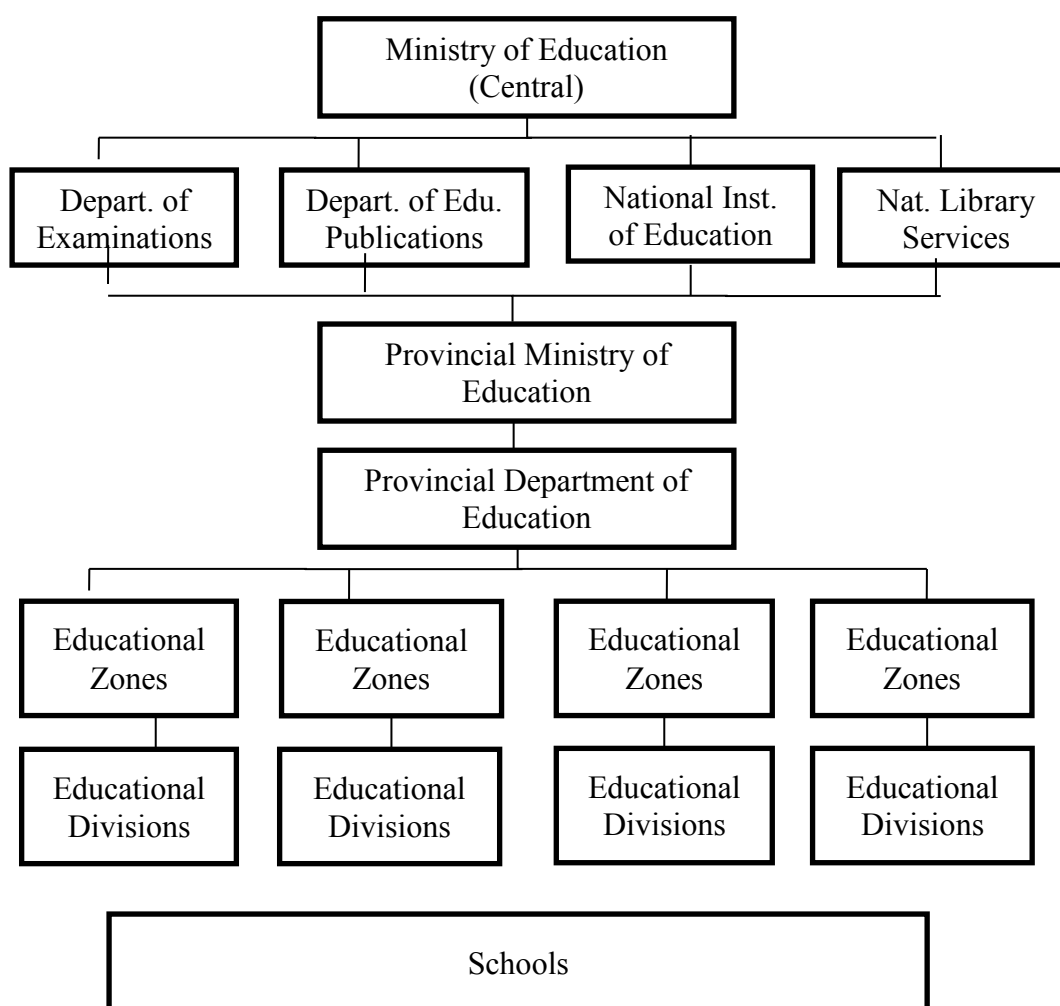


Figure 2. Education Network of Sri Lanka

The sections below present the number of schools, students and teachers, the types of schools, the subjects of general curriculum, and the learning and teaching strategies at the secondary school level. The information given in these sections i.e., about the current education system is important as English language teaching functions within its boundaries. Much of the data provided by the students, teachers and other participants in the preliminary (cf Chapter Six) and the main study (cf Chapter Seven) of this research are referred to the information provided in this section. Much of the problems shared by the teachers particularly in the main study interviews (cf Chapter Seven) are closely connected with the issues of

the general education system such as the strategies used by the teachers, the classifications of the schools, the duration of the lessons and strategies used by the students to learn English. Hence, it is necessary to inform the reader what is necessary to understand the data and its analysis later in this study. However, these sections present the issues of the general education system, English language teaching and teacher education without discussing any problems associated with them as they are dealt with in Chapter Three.

2.2.2.1 School, student and teacher population in Sri Lanka

Throughout Sri Lanka, 9589 schools are governed by provincial councils while 342 are managed by the central government as National schools (MoE, 2013). Besides these, there are 734 Pirivenas, monastic colleges for the education of Buddhist priests in Sri Lanka (SLEI, *ibid.*).

The majority of the schools in Sri Lanka are associated with the ethnicity of the student populace i.e. the Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim and a good number of them are named after any one of the major religions of the country: Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. The medium of instruction in schools has been either Sinhala or Tamil since the independence of the country in 1948. However, due to the bilingual education which was reintroduced in 2002 (Mahawatha, 2012) 584 schools are now functioning in either Sinhala or Tamil and English; that is to say certain subjects are taught in English and the rest of the subjects in Sinhala or Tamil. There are more than 220 thousand teachers educating nearly four million students (MoE, *ibid.*).

2.2.2.2 Curriculum and learning strategies at secondary education level

The schools are expected to follow the national curriculum prepared by the National Institute of Education. However they have freedom to make alterations and variations according to their local needs but only in the lower grades curriculum which is not subject to national level examinations (MoE, *ibid.*).

The daily timetable is divided into eight periods each lasting forty minutes. First language (Sinhala or Tamil), English as a second language, Mathematics, Science and History are major subjects and included daily in the timetable. Added to

these, students follow minor subjects such as Religion, Physical Education and a few other optional subjects (ibid.). Hence at secondary level, learning takes place on the basis of different subjects.

In Sri Lanka the academic year is divided into three terms. At the end of each term, students are examined on subjects through written examinations. They also need to do practical examinations in relevant subjects. Examination papers are prepared by a Zonal Department of Education (DoE). Thus all the schools in a particular educational zone need to comply with their DoE as to how much they should cover in the curriculum within stipulated times. Besides term examinations, students' learning is monitored through School Based Assessment (SBA) which is carried out by individual teachers at the classroom level (ibid.).

2.2.2.3 Teaching strategies and regulations at secondary school

The Ministry of Education (MoE) has instructed teachers to follow certain strategies in their teaching such as writing the lesson plan which is called the notes of the lesson, conducting the lessons in the 5E method and conducting regular SBAs for students. These areas are explained below.

i. Notes of the lesson

Notes of the lesson is a written plan of the lesson which should be prepared by the teacher for every lesson. The teachers have to write the objective of a particular lesson, how they would proceed with the lesson to achieve the objective, what teaching aids and materials they would use in the classroom and what kind of activities students would engage with. According to the regulation of the school, teachers have to submit the notes of the lesson for all the lessons of a given week to the principal on the first day of the week (Monday) before the start of the school. Teachers are expected to enter the classroom for their first lesson in a given week with their notes of lesson endorsed by the principal. The crucial aspect of preparing the notes of the lesson is the way the Department of Education wants them to be written which is in the 5E method.

ii. 5E method

The Ministry of Education (MoE) introduced a method called 5E method as part of the educational reforms in 2007 (Puteh and Nawastheen, 2013). Each of the 5 E's described a phase of learning: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate. The method requires students to sit in groups in the classroom and learn through discussion and interaction. The MoE instructed teachers to write their notes of the lesson in the 5E method and conduct each lesson using the same method.

iii. School Based Assessments

In 1994 the National Institute of Education initiated a Classroom Based Assessment for Grades Six to Nine. This programme was piloted, revised and changed as School Based Assessments (SBAs). Later the Department of Examination did further revisions and implemented the revised SBA programme to GCE O/L Grades in 2001 and A/L Grades in 2003 (Gonzales, 2009). According to SBA, teachers have to assess the learning of students every month. They have to prepare different assessments to assess different skills or competencies of students. The current textbooks for English as a second language in Sri Lanka are based on competencies for example, reading for grasping the general idea of the text, reading for getting the in-depth understanding of the text, introducing oneself, identifying the adjectives, reading aloud, describing the picture and so on. The student is expected to learn particular competencies in a particular unit of the textbook.

Since SBA is standardised across schools, teachers have to record the SBA scores in relevant school records and are expected to send copies of the records to the Department of Education. SBA scores for O/L and A/L students are given separately with their respective exam results (Parameswaram, 2009) that is to say they are not integrated with students' final results.

2.3 English language teaching (ELT) in Sri Lanka

This section discusses ELT in the present education system of Sri Lanka and the recruitment and education of English language teachers in Sri Lanka.

2.3.1 ELT in the present education system of Sri Lanka

This section presents the structure and content of the ELT curriculum, the learning strategies of students, learning materials and opportunities for learning English. A clear exposition of principles and assumptions underpinning four different approaches to English language teaching in Sri Lanka are presented here. The approaches are Activity Based Oral English, Communicative Language Teaching, Bilingual Education and English as a Life-Skill Programme. The exposition also outlines the level of competence in the English language required by teachers using these approaches. These issues are presented here so that readers, in the light of the knowledge these issues provide, can understand the views of the teachers later in the main study.

2.3.1.1 Structure and Content of the ELT curriculum

i. Primary level

The primary level in the Sri Lankan education system consists of Grades from One to Five. Formal English teaching that is to say teaching English through the prescribed textbooks is provided to students from Grade Three. Students at Grade One and Two are introduced to basic English through a programme called Activity Based Oral English.

a) Activity based oral English (ABOE)

ABOE is the beginning of the ELT curriculum structure. It has specifically been designed for students in Grades One and Two to use simple English for communication. It is confined to speech and listening and is not meant for reading and writing as explained below:

Spoken English was introduced as oral communication through the activity based curriculum. Provision for opportunities for all children in the

country to use simple conversation is a new feature that has been introduced. This feature is referred to as ‘Activity Based Oral English’. As the name suggests, the emphasis here is on the use of English in conversation while children are engaged in guided play and activity, especially under the subject ‘Environment Related Activities’ to be carried out by the class teacher and not by a special teacher. Further, no separate periods have been allocated for this programme [i.e., ABOE] (NEC and NIE 1999).

The primary curriculum consists of four main subject areas such as language (mother tongue), mathematics, environment related activities and religion (MoE, 2013). Environment related activities is a subject in which students are introduced to the natural elements of their surroundings and different people who live around them. Since the activity based oral English (ABOE) is integrated with environment related activities children can learn a few English vocabulary items and structures relevant to different environment related themes and they learn them through songs, games, nursery rhymes and other activities (Rohan, 2012). The teacher is expected by the curriculum designers ‘to introduce some simple words orally, at the appropriate instances when teaching different themes in environment related activities. This will be more natural and meaningful and relates to the task at hand’ (Atugoda, 2005: 1). This reflects earlier primary education curriculum guidelines in the 1970s:

Children learn willingly and responsively when they are offered meaningful experiences in a natural setting, making abundant use of the environment familiar to them. Consequently, the compartmentalized subject curriculum at the primary level should give way to a set of integrated activities, which children may pursue freely according to their interests and inclinations (Peiris, 1973 cited by Roshan, 2012: 11).

Since ABOE is integrated with environment related activities, the English vocabulary and the basic structures have to be taught by the primary class teachers who may not be very familiar with English (Rohan, 2004). The limited vocabulary and incorrect pronunciation of teachers who teach activity based oral English (Rohan, 2012) is seen as a defect in the programme and likely to negatively impact on children learning English such that ‘if a child learns anything faulty, it would become a massive task to correct it by the English teachers later’ (Atugoda, 2005: 1). Nonetheless, a report by the National Institute of Education (NIE) (1999) on the activity based oral English clearly states that no English trained teachers will be

assigned to implement this programme as this has been integrated with environment related activities which are conducted by primary trained teachers irrespective of their English knowledge. Hence the report does not explicitly outline any level of English competence required by the teachers using this programme. According to the report the primary teachers, whether their English knowledge is based on G.C.E (general certificate of education) O/L or A/L education, are requested to implement activity based oral English. The NIE provides special training to primary teachers to enhance their existing English knowledge but this has been reported as insufficient and poorly organised (Fernando and Mallawa, 2003) (see also section 3.2.3).

ii. Secondary level

The English language curriculum for students at the secondary school level has been structured through textbooks which mainly focus on the reading and writing skills of students in view of preparing them for the O/L examination (Atugoda, 2005).

The content of textbooks from Grades Six to Eleven mainly consists of texts to develop students' reading and comprehension skills. The content of the texts are based on the social, cultural and religious background of the students along with some topics related to the international world. The texts accompany questions and various types of activities to develop students' writing skills. The textbooks also contain a small number of dialogues, pair work and group activities to develop students' speaking skills. Every unit in the textbooks contains some explanation on grammatical items related to the comprehension text along with one or two activities as exercises on those grammatical items.

The current textbooks for English as a second language are more communicative in nature that is to say they have been designed to promote the communicative competence of students. Teachers are encouraged by teacher educators and resource personnel in their teacher education programmes and continuous professional development programmes to reduce teaching the language using the

lecture method (reading, explaining and doing activities from the textbook) and to make the lessons based on communicative language teaching.

a) Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

The main conception of CLT is the idea of developing learners' communicative competence. The communicative competence here includes the knowledge of what to say and how to say it appropriately according to the situations, the speakers and their roles and intentions. CLT was promoted because this kind of knowledge was not included in the traditional grammatical and vocabulary teaching approaches. It was assumed that learners would pick up this kind of knowledge informally (Richards, 2006). Hence, the rationale behind CLT is to develop learners' communicative competence in contrast to their grammatical competence.

Grammatical competence refers to the knowledge we have of a language that accounts for our ability to produce sentences in a language. It refers to knowledge of the building blocks of sentences (e.g., parts of speech, tenses, phrases, clauses, sentence patterns) and how sentences are formed. (...) While grammatical competence is an important dimension of language learning, it is clearly not all that is involved in learning a language since one can master the rules of sentence formation in a language and still not be very successful at being able to use the language for meaningful communication. It is the latter capacity which is understood by the term communicative competence (Richards, 2006: 2-3).

Since the English language teaching programme in the Sri Lankan education system considers only reading and writing skills of the students, their ability to use the language for meaningful communication is not developed. This creates many problems for them in their future jobs prospects as many private firms and companies are keen to recruit candidates who have achieved good communicative command in English (Herath & Ranasinghe, 2011). Hence, in order to develop students' communicative ability, the government of Sri Lanka gradually adopted the CLT approach and published the necessary textbooks which are more communicative in nature, i.e., the textbooks include language activities which help students to know different functions of the language, to learn how to use the

language according to different situations and people, and to learn how to maintain a conversation in spite of a lack of knowledge in the language.

The communicative language teaching (CLT) approach generally requires language teachers to be fluent in their communication so that they can develop their students' communicative competence (Richards, 2006). However, having good English communicative competence alone is not sufficient for teachers to conduct English lessons in CLT as the approach is based on certain important principles. First of all a teacher using the CLT approach is considered to be more of a facilitator than knowledgeable in the language. Teachers using CLT are expected to create in the classroom a language learning environment in which students can communicate meaningfully with one another. They are also expected to facilitate interactions among students. CLT allows reasonable use of the first language (L1) of the students and tolerates their errors in the target language. Teachers need to have the ability to use L1 efficiently and not to discourage students when they make mistakes in the target language (ibid.).

Though CLT primarily considers the communicative aspect of the language learning, due importance is given to the learning of grammatical structures and functions. For this teachers need to assess the target language learning needs of their students (cf: Kojima et al. 2005). Though CLT follows these principles, in Sri Lankan classrooms they are not considered fully owing to certain practical issues: teachers tend to ignore the communicative aspects of the prescribed textbooks and are primarily concerned to teach reading and writing as students are tested only on these two language skills in the exams, large numbers of students in classrooms make the lessons through CLT difficult to conduct and above all teachers are not provided with sufficient training to conduct lessons using the CLT approach (Karunaratne, 2008; Perera, 2001; Wickrema and Colenso, 2003). Hence, teachers are not sufficiently encouraged or helped to make use of the prescribed English textbooks using the CLT approach. Consequently, a precise level of English competence is not explicitly expected of teachers to conduct English lessons using CLT, but they are indirectly encouraged to utilize the textbooks to prepare the students for the English exams which examine their reading and writing skills only.

The introduction of English as a life-skill programme (explained in ii. of 2.3.1.2) shows that the English communicative competence of the students was not developed through the CLT approach of the English lessons (see section 3.3.2 for problems of CLT in Sri Lanka).

2.3.1.2 English learning strategies in secondary level

At the secondary school level (Grades Six to Eleven), English is considered as one of the core subjects included in the timetable daily and hence students follow five lessons a week and each lesson lasts forty minutes. Students' learning is primarily based on the textbook allocated to each grade. As with other subjects, students' progress in English is examined through regular assessments conducted by teachers in the classroom and through examinations conducted by the Zonal Department of Education at the end of each term of the year.

In Sri Lanka, lessons are not conducted in subject specific classrooms. Students follow all their lessons in the same classroom. Generally in IAB and National Schools there are English language rooms which, according to the resource capacity of the school, may contain materials for reading or audio/video materials for listening or some advanced technology to conduct lessons in more creative ways.

Bilingual education and English as a life-skill programme can be considered the learning strategies for English as a second language introduced most recently in the education system of Sri Lanka.

i. Bilingual Education

In Sri Lanka English is no more associated with the power of British dominance which prevailed in the colonial and early post-colonial time, rather it "has gained a new status as an international language" (Little, *ibid*: 203). Such status and the awareness of people of the importance of the English language made it possible to reintroduce English as a medium of instruction in schools.

Bilingual education was started in 2002. It was introduced to Grade Six students as they transit from primary to junior secondary level. The main objective of this

bilingual education is (while maintaining Sinhala and Tamil as national and official languages) to provide an opportunity to all students, irrespective of ethnic, religious and social status, to acquire proficiency of both first language (Sinhala or Tamil) and English as a second language (Nanayakkara, nd). Bandara (2008) states that bilingual education was introduced to the Sri Lanka education system in order to promote the language proficiency of the students as the teaching of English was not satisfactory and failed to meet the needs of the majority of the students. According to the proposals for a National Policy Framework on General Education in Sri-Lanka (2003), bilingual education was introduced to provide the students with adequate English knowledge for higher education and career advancement and to provide a good English learning opportunity for Grade Five scholars who have a rural background.

Students are free to choose this mode of study and they are also free to choose the language medium for the exam. At the beginning one hundred schools volunteered to venture this programme. Now there are 584 bilingual schools throughout Sri Lanka, but only thirty-six in the Jaffna district (MoE, 2004) where this study was located. When bilingual education was introduced schools were given by the Ministry of Education an option to teach a maximum of five subjects in bilingual mode: Maths, Science, History, Health and Physical Education. Later History was withdrawn from the list and it was decided that it should be taught in vernacular languages as it transmits cultural values of the country to students (Nanayakkara, nd).

Regarding the requirement of the English language competence level of the teachers who are involved in bilingual education, the literature (Report on the Bilingual Education, 2007; Report on Bilingual Teacher empowerment, 2007; Mahawatta, 2012; Neranjani, 2013) on Sri Lankan bilingual education does not explicitly mention any criteria. The reason for this is prior to the introduction of bilingual education none of the teacher education or teacher training programmes in Sri Lanka had trained teachers exclusively for teaching in bilingual classrooms. It was the responsibility of the school administration to assess the English language competence of the teachers to allow them to teach the bilingual subjects.

Only in recent years have prospective pre-service teachers been given options to enrol themselves for bilingual teacher education programmes. A candidate who applies for a bilingual teacher education programme is expected to have a credit pass in G.C.E. O/L English examination. The eligible candidates follow the whole teacher education programme in the medium of English and by the time they complete the teacher education programme, it is expected that they should be able to handle their respective bilingual subjects in English. Further, while teaching they are provided with regular continuous professional development programmes by the Department of Education. However, a lack of qualified bilingual teachers is a continuous problem in Sri Lanka for more students to access bilingual education. A recent study (Neranjani, 2013) reveals that though the performance of bilingual students is generally high, only a small percentage of students in a few selected urban schools have had the opportunity for bilingual education mainly because of the lack of qualified teachers of English. Neranjani (2013) concluded that opportunities should be provided for bilingual teachers to develop their English language proficiency (see section 3.3.4 for problems of bilingual education in Sri Lanka).

ii. English as a life-skill programme

From the outset the Sri Lankan English language school curriculum dealt with the reading and writing skills of students alone, thus negatively affecting students' speaking skills. Hence, in 2009 the Presidential Task Force⁹ in Sri Lanka launched the English as a life-skill programme which ultimately targets the communicative competence of children:

9. It was set up by one of the previous presidents (HE Chandrika Bandaranayake Kumaratunga) of Sri Lanka to drive widespread adoption of English and Information Technology (IT) in the country. The task force was mandated to improve the knowledge of English and the IT of youth and school children. The task force consisted of two sub task forces in English and IT respectively.

The rationale behind this program (...) designed especially and mainly for effective communication is to make a swift shift from “Rule learning” to “Creative Learning of English”. The idea held by linguists that “Language is both rule governed and creative” has been dealt, only with the first part of this tenet so far, i.e. rule learning which includes rules, order, regularities, structures, patterns and theories in the process of teaching English to develop only reading and writing (Jayasinghe, 2010: 1).

The creative aspect of the language learning which is greatly related to communication has not or hardly been dealt with at schools in Sri Lanka.

In other words, what we have been doing so far was “Teaching about the language” and not “Teaching the Language how to use it” to our students whose principal aim is to learn English to use it as a powerful means of effective communication (Presidential Task Force 2009).

As a result, the teaching and learning of the rules and structures of the English language has produced in Sri Lanka a generation of students whose communicative skills are so curtailed that they hardly realise the utility value of English. Consequently, students are reluctant and hesitant to speak English today. This is despite the fact that to develop students’ speaking ability the Presidential Task Force in 2009 instructed the schools through the Ministry of Education (MoE) to allocate one lesson a week to teach spoken English to students. To assist the teachers with spoken English lessons the Presidential Task Force in collaboration with the MoE published a special teachers’ guide and conducted seminars for them. The Presidential Task Force periodically sent English language master trainers abroad to be trained in teaching the communicative aspect of English. These master trainers organized regular seminars for teachers to train them to conduct spoken English lessons in the classrooms.

As with bilingual education, the level of English competence teachers should possess to implement English as a life-skill programme has not been prescribed by the Department of Education or other authorities. Since the MoE instructed the schools to allocate one lesson a week for this programme, all the teachers of English who teach English in the secondary classes are expected to implement this programme irrespective of their level of English competence. Teachers’ existing level of English competence was presumed by the Department of Education to be

sufficient to implement this programme. At the time of implementation the MoE also expressed its intention to test students' communicative competence in the O/L examination in the future (Fernando, 2013). (Section 3.3.4 highlights problems associated with English as a life-skill programme in Sri Lanka.)

2.3.1.3 Problems faced by teachers in aforementioned English teaching approaches

As mentioned in each of the above English language teaching (ELT) approaches, the English language required by the teachers using those approaches is not explicitly laid down in any documents related to those approaches. The introduction of the Activity Based Oral English, Communicative Language Teaching Approach, Bilingual Education and English as a Life skill programme shows a shift from teaching English literacy towards enhancing the spoken language ability of the students in the history of ELT in Sri Lanka. However, the literature (Rohan, 2004, 2012; Atugoda, 2005; Fernando and Mallawa, 2003; Karunaratne, 2008; Neranjani, 2013) reveal that the implementation of these programmes did not specifically emphasise the level of English competence the teachers should possess. Besides, the literature also reveals that the English language skills provided to teachers to implement these programmes was not sufficient. However, it can be argued that the bilingual education gives more opportunities to teachers than the other three programmes to develop relevant English language skills as they teach the content of the subjects such as Mathematics or Science through the medium of English.

Regarding the different English language programmes implemented by the Ministry of Education, it becomes obvious from the literature (Atugoda, 2005; Fernando and Mallawa, 2003; Karunaratne, 2008; Perera, 2001; Neranjani, 2013) that the teachers of English in Sri Lanka are not provided with sufficient professional enhancement to implement those programmes in the classroom. The literature also reveals the lack of a pilot study for the implemented language programmes, consultation with teacher representatives and periodic evaluation of the respective programmes. Hence students cannot obtain maximum benefits from these language programmes as their teachers do not have sufficient skills or

up to date and relevant knowledge to handle those programmes. In addition the teachers in the districts of Jaffna were more affected by the civil war than the teachers in other parts of Sri Lanka and consequently were deprived of frequent continuous professional development programme facilities. Besides, educational critics such as Sumathy (2011) argue that certain programmes such as the bilingual education or English as a life-skill programme were primarily implemented for the sake of the political interest of the ruling party of the government. Consequently, it is argued that the real purpose of those programmes will not be accomplished. This is further illustrated as for example, bilingual education was implemented to provide an opportunity to all students to acquire proficiency of both first language (Sinhala or Tamil) and English (Nanayakkara, nd). However, it is carried out only by some urban prestigious schools (584 out of 10,000 schools throughout Sri Lanka. MoE, 2004). According to the contextual knowledge and experience of the researcher, the bilingual programme is likely to attract only the students who already have good English competence. Besides, there are a lack of qualified teachers able to deliver bilingual education in the country (Neranjani, 2013). Hence the programme does not cater for the students in village and remote schools. The English as a life-skill programme which had been made compulsory in all the schools was introduced as a way to compensate for the defect of the bilingual education. However, the future target of this programme was not clearly conveyed by the central Ministry of Education to the provincial or the zonal education officials as it was found by the researcher (in his former role as an English teacher in Sri Lanka) that many educational authorities were not aware whether the Ministry of Education would make arrangements to examine the speaking competence of the students under this English as a life-skill programme. The researcher as a teacher of English prior to the current study found from the perceptions of the teachers and principals that there was a lack of seriousness in implementing this particular programme in schools.

Hence on the one hand, English teachers were not provided with sufficient professional training to implement the English programmes in the classrooms and on the other hand, the implementing body of the programmes failed to evaluate the progress of these programmes to make their benefits available to all the

students. From this background, it is possible to argue that when it comes to the effective teaching of English the educational authorities who blamed the teachers for their lack of teacher effectiveness did not propose any ways of effective teaching related to the above mentioned language programmes. The discussion on effective teaching of English by the educational authorities not specifically related to the existing English language programmes is likely to create an impression that there is a lack of belief in the workability of those language programmes. Given this, the English language competence particularly the communicative competence which is connected to the Communicative Language Teaching approach and English as a life-skill programme was one of the important aspects of effective teaching of English considered in the current study. Other important considerations in understanding the effectiveness of English teaching in the current study included school type (section a. 2.2.1.1), school phase (primary or secondary) and location (Jaffna). This study was conducted among the students and teachers in secondary high and low-performing schools, and as such it included the first three types of schools (*table 2* of section a. 2.2.1.1). Moreover, since the study was conducted in the district of Jaffna which is predominantly populated by Tamil students and teachers, the aspects of effective teaching of English which are more specific to the Tamil context needed to be considered. Focusing on teachers of English in secondary schools in Jaffna afforded opportunities for English teachers to provide their perceptions on their own sense of English teaching efficacy.

2.3.1.4 Learning materials and facilities in schools

The textbook given by the Ministry of Education (MoE) is the primary learning material for English. Each student is given a free copy of the textbook along with the student work book. The former is published by the Department of Educational Publications and the latter is prepared by the National Institute of Education (NIE). The NIE also prepares a Teacher's Instructional Manual as a guide to conduct lessons.

Apart from the textbook, the available materials to improve students' knowledge of English are the books in libraries. The central government directly funds the

national schools library facilities. The provincial schools, to furnish their libraries, have to use the funds allocated by the provincial MoE for ‘Quality Input’ which is sufficient only for fulfilling needs such as purchasing stationery. Therefore only some urban schools have limited library facilities.

The modern technology based materials or facilities for learning English are very much limited in provincial schools. All the national schools are provided with such facilities by the central government.

2.3.1.5 English learning opportunities outside classrooms

Outside of their English lessons students can learn English (within the school environment) through English Day competitions (Karunaratne, *ibid.*) which consist of reading, copy writing, spelling, recitation, orations, creative writing and drama. Firstly, students compete in school level competitions and then selected students compete in divisional, zonal, provincial and national levels. The students who compete in different English Day competition levels are trained and supported by their respective teachers of English. A number of schools in urban areas particularly schools with sufficient numbers of English teachers also conduct English Day celebrations yearly in which students get more opportunities to express their talents and eliminate their shyness and fear in speaking English.

Besides these English learning opportunities, the students studying in leading or prestigious schools get more opportunities to learn English as such schools use English to a considerable extent in day-to-day school activities such as morning assembly, prayer sessions and functions such as prize day, sports meet and parents’ day.

2.3.1.6 English learning opportunities outside schools

A generally available opportunity for learning English outside schools is through private tuition (Karunaratne, *ibid.*). Private tutors use the textbook used in schools however the duration of the lesson is longer than in schools and students receive more personal attention of the teacher when the number of students is small.

Besides private tuitions, students who have educated parents or siblings may have opportunities to learn some English at home and receive help especially with their homework. Opportunities for learning English through educational programmes on the radio and television are generally not available. However, English newspapers, magazines and online materials and language learning programmes are increasingly available to students and teachers now because of free transport and more access to information technology after the ending of the civil war in 2009.

2.3.2 Teacher Education

Teacher education or teacher development is closely connected to effective teaching (Brosh, 1996; Park and Lee, 2006; Wichadee, 2010). Since this study investigates how various problems affect the teaching efficacy of the teachers of English, it is essential to know how the teacher education programmes in Sri Lanka recruit, educate and deploy teachers to teach English in the current education system.

2.3.2.1 Recruitment and deployment of teachers

The Ministry of Education (MoE) in Sri Lanka recruits teachers on three levels in terms of their academic qualifications.

1. Direct recruitment after G.C.E. (A/L) exam:
Students who pass all the subjects in the A/L are directly recruited to the teaching service.
2. Recruitment through National Colleges of Education (NCOE):
Students who pass the G.C.E A/L exams can apply for three-year pre-service teacher education at NCOE (2.3.2.2). Students are introduced to elementary education, Science and Maths education, English, religious education, Home Science and Physical Education.
3. Recruitment of graduates from universities:
Graduates, irrespective of their knowledge or training in Education, are recruited from different universities to be teachers in their specialized subjects (Dharmadasa et al, 1996).

All teachers are recruited either through comprehensive written tests or interviews and in some cases through both means. In recruiting students who pass the GCE A/L exams, their academic performance, co-curricular and extracurricular activities at schools are taken into consideration. Certain places in Sri Lanka are considered 'difficult' to reach as there are insufficient transport services and other basic facilities. The shortage of teachers in such areas has been a constant problem. The Ministry of Education (MoE) has addressed this problem by giving the recruited candidates an option to select three difficult areas, in order of preference, in which they would like to work for three years. Teachers who graduate from NCOE or teachers' colleges are appointed to difficult areas for three years. The MoE also offers incentives and promotions to each teacher and various facilities to his/her children if the teacher out of his/her goodwill opts to work in a difficult area for a particular period of time (Dharmadasa et al, *ibid.*; MoE, 2004).

2.3.2.2 Education and development

Full-time teacher education programmes are available in four different types of institutions in Sri Lanka. These institutions provide two types of teacher development programme: initial teacher development and in-service teacher development.

1. Teachers' Colleges
2. National Colleges of Education (NCOE)
3. National Institute of Education (NIE)
4. Universities

Teachers' Colleges

Teachers' colleges offer three-year in-service training courses to untrained teachers who have different levels of academic qualification and teaching experience. The first two years are programmed around course work in respect of the specialized areas of the trainees and general education, and in the third year they are posted to schools for the internship training (Dharmadasa et al, *ibid.*).

Until the establishment of National Colleges of Education (NCOE), the contribution of the teachers' colleges in providing initial teacher training for teachers was very much significant. Three teachers' colleges in places called Maharagama, Peradeniya, and Bolawalana produced English teachers up to 2001 when Bolawalana College was closed down and Peradeniya College was converted into a NCOE. Maharagama Teachers' College is still in operation providing initial teacher training (Samaraweera, 2011).

NCOE

NCOE were established in 1985. It provides training for the pre-service teachers recruited from among those who get through the GCE A/L examinations. Candidates are selected based on the performance of an English language test and interview. Eligible candidates are provided with a two year residential course free of charge through the financial aid of the central government and in the third year they are posted to different schools for internship and are given a stipend by the government (Nielsen and Tatto, 1993; World Data on Education 2010/11). Currently eighteen NCOEs provide training to pre-service teachers (Samaraweera, *ibid.*). They design their teacher education curriculum under four main areas.

- a. Foundational/professional education
- b. General education
- c. Areas of specialization
- d. Unscheduled activities (Nielsen and Tatto, *ibid.*)

At successful completion of the course, the candidates are awarded a National Diploma in Teaching which is a non-graduate qualification. These diploma holders are appointed to government schools. The National Institute of Education and certain national universities run internal and external graduate programmes (B.Ed) in order to help these diploma holders further their teacher knowledge (Samaraweera, *ibid.*).

National Institute of Education (NIE)

The NIE which is the apex body of the general education system was established in 1985. Providing professional development and general competence to personnel in the education system is one of its main objectives (Samaraweera, *ibid.*). Accordingly, its contribution to the English language teacher development is channelled through the following three ways:

a. Programmes conducted directly by Department of English

A Diploma in Teaching English as a second language programme is conducted for senior teachers of English (those who have completed at least five years of teaching after their initial training). This is a one year full-time course giving a wider exposure to teachers in the field of English language teaching. Though recognized as an important programme for teachers to develop their profession, it caters only for a limited number of admissions (fifty teachers annually) (Samaraweera, *ibid.*).

b. Programmes conducted by Department of English in collaboration with the other departments and agencies

A number of teacher education programmes were conducted under this project in the past:

- In 2003 a ten day residential programme was conducted for over a period of one year with the collaboration of the World Bank and the Ministry of Education (MoE). The trainees were selected on the basis of the performance of an island-wide English language test (developed by the Open University of Sri Lanka) conducted for the teachers of English.
- A five day residential programme in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank which funded the Secondary Education Modernization Project (SEMP) of the MoE was conducted to improve the quality of the teachers of English in 'Isuru Schools' (*ibid.*) (schools which come under the SEMP project are called Isuru schools).
- In the 1980s, due to the shortage of teachers of English, the government launched a mass recruitment campaign through a recruitment examination.

The high performers were appointed as teachers with a three week long pre-service training. Their initial training needs were provided through a Professional In-service English Teacher Training (PRINSETT) programme which operated in the 1980s and 90s. Besides the initial training for teachers, the PRINSETT also provided training to hundreds of teachers during the weekends for two years following the same syllabus of teachers' colleges.

- The candidates who performed lower than the high performers were provided with a language training course for one year at District English Language Improvement Centres. There were fifteen such centres. (ibid.).

c. Programmes conducted by the Faculty of Education Leadership Development (FELD) and National Institute of Education (NIE)

The FELD and NIE conducts in-service teacher development programmes such as B.Ed., post-graduate diploma in education and M.Ed in order to upgrade the professional standards of teachers in Sri Lanka (ibid.). Besides, the National Institute of Education also runs a Distance Teacher Education Programme through the Department of Distance Education to provide a professional training to a backlog of untrained non-graduate teachers in the country's school system. It is a correspondence-cum-contact programme which requires the teachers to attend contact classes during weekends at distance education regional centres (Dharmadasa et al, ibid.).

Universities

The universities of Colombo, Peradeniya and Jaffna and the Open University of Sri Lanka provide postgraduate diploma courses to graduate teachers. These universities are different from the other three teacher education institutes as they provide traditional academic subjects at post-graduate degree level. They provide two years part-time courses or one-year full-time course and award a Post-Graduate Diploma in Education to successful graduate teachers. Since the annual intake of students at these universities is very low (between 600 -700), the National Institute of Education (NIE) conducts sixteen-month post graduate

diploma courses through ten regional centres in the country to handle the huge size of the national untrained graduate teachers (Dharmadasa et al, *ibid.*; MoE, 2004). These universities also provide the bachelors, masters and doctorate level courses to teachers (Samaraweera, *ibid.*).

2.3.2.3 Monitoring the impact of professional development at school level

The impact of the professional development received by teachers of English through various teacher education programmes is monitored through the network of In-Service Advisors (ISAs) attached to the Divisional Education offices which is the smallest unit of education administration that comes under the Provincial Department of Education (*ibid.*) and the immediate hierarchy to a school in a particular locality (*figure 2*). ISAs are appointed according to subject and each Division has one ISA responsible for one subject in the secondary curriculum. The ISAs are expected to make regular visits to schools in order to support teachers in their classroom teaching. According to the Ministry of Education, the role of ISAs is to train teachers to teach the new curriculum introduced by the National Institute of Education, through seminars and to observe the teaching learning process in the classrooms and advise teachers on how to improve their teaching (*ibid.*).

2.4 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the structure of the general education system and the English language teaching (ELT) curriculum in Sri Lanka as background knowledge to facilitate understanding of the problems that are associated with ELT and their impact on teachers and students in the English language classroom which are dealt with in the following chapter. In order to provide a holistic view of the research context, this chapter also presented an overview of the social context of Sri Lanka within which the general education system and the ELT curriculum develop and function. Two important issues can be taken into special consideration from this chapter. First, the effects of the Sri Lankan civil war (e.g. displacement of people, destruction of schools and economic blockade) and the characteristics of the education system (the unequal provision and access to English education and the politicised nature) would be more challenging for the

teachers and students of English than the teachers and students of other subjects because of the distinctive nature of the second language (L2) teaching and learning (the reader may be facilitated by section 4.1.2 in Chapter Four to understand the distinctive nature of the L2 discipline). Second, given that L2 teaching and learning is significantly different from other disciplines, the provisions and facilities for L2 teaching and learning in the Sri Lankan education system is very much limited, i.e., the learning and teaching strategies, classroom situations and resources are common for English and other subjects.

3. Background: Problems Associated to English Language Teaching (ELT) in Sri Lanka

Introduction

An abundance of literature deals with many problems related to ELT in Sri Lanka. Some problems are more related to students than teachers and vice versa. There are also problems more specific to the curriculum or to schools in general. As such, this chapter categorizes the problems identified in the literature under four main issues so that the reader may have a better understanding of how these problems affect ELT in Sri Lanka. The four main issues are those related to the students, teaching and the learning contexts (i.e. the classroom and the school), the curriculum and teachers.

3.1 Issues related to students

This section presents the factors that can demotivate students from learning English: the socio-economic status of the parents, the lack of encouragement from parents, the lack of English language exposure in the social contexts of the students, the difficulties faced by the students in dealing with the learning materials in the classroom and the lack of qualified teachers in the schools are discussed below.

3.1.1 Lack of motivation of students

Perera et al. (2010) contends that students' motivation can be linked to their previous performance or achievement in the second language (L2) learning. Successful performance in the L2 learning is likely to occur in prestigious urban schools where students have access to more language learning facilities and qualified teachers. In contrast, small schools in Sri Lanka, mostly the Type II

schools are generally located in socially disadvantaged contexts though few schools are found in suburban areas. The socio-economic issues which prevail in such small schools serve to undermine students' learning. These factors are:

- lack of material facilities
- less conducive learning environment due to poor infrastructure
- less or total absence of English language exposure for students
- low income of parents and their lack of encouragement to children due to their lack of understanding of the importance of English (Perera et al., *ibid.*).

The issues are discussed further in the following sections.

3.1.2 Socio-economic status of parents

One of the motivational factors for urban students to in Sri Lanka to learn English is the socio-economic affluence which is enjoyed by their parents or is part of their social environment (Karunratne, 2009). Paradoxically, Sri Lankan students are considered to have motivational deficit due to the poor socio-economic status of their parents and living contexts (Perera, 2006). Perera found that much learning does not take place in schools which were located in poor socio-economic contexts as a result of the psychological problems encountered by most of the students in such schools. She explained this through the concept of the 'culture of poverty'. The experience of being poor creates in students an attitude of dependency or fatalism which leads not only to a condition of economic poverty but also to cognitive poverty in them. This situation instils a fatalism in their minds and they think that they cannot improve the standard of their life. Perera's findings are not dissimilar to Steele (1997) who looked at African Americans and female students' low attainment in examinations. Steele said that though these students had the necessary interest, skills, resources and opportunities to prosper in education, since they had negative stereotypes about their abilities in many scholastic domains they were not able to perform well in their exams. Therefore these negative stereotypes were considered a threat by the students as they depressed their intellectual performance and in the longer term they undermined their identity itself.

Besides the motivational deficit, the low socio-economic status of Sri Lankan parents affects their children's learning of English in two ways. One is that rural parents are unable to seek admission for their children in the urban better quality primary schools. In Jaffna there are a number of prestigious primary schools which give greater attention to preparing students for the Grade Five scholarship examination¹⁰ and as a result of this, students are likely to receive a better foundation in English. However, since these schools are located in the urban areas, the rural students have to join the primary schools in their own villages where they obtain a lesser quality education (Little, 2000). However, economically affluent parents who live in rural areas succeed in securing places for their children in urban prestigious primary schools by making large donations to the schools, even though this is prohibited by the government (MoE, 2012). A study of UNESCO (1984) shows that by Asian standards a fairly high percentage (seventy-eight per cent) of students' (aged five to fourteen) enrolment is found in Sri Lanka, but almost eight per cent of drop-outs occurs due to the low economic and social conditions of their parents. Though Sri Lanka provides free education, its larger benefits are mainly enjoyed by the children of more affluent families, and poor children have to bear many hidden costs such as stationery, uniforms, sports equipment and commuting to schools (Manoharan, 2002).

The second issue is the cost of private language lessons. Private tuition has become essential in Sri Lanka rather than an option primarily because of the overloaded school curriculum for students (Hewavissenti, 2010; Kuruwita, 2014). Education in Sri Lanka aims at main public examinations such as Grade Five scholarship examination, GCE O/L and A/L (Liyanage, 2013). As these exams become more competitive, students and their parents believe that tuition classes will help them answer the examination questions and thereby obtain higher marks

10. It is a highly competitive examination conducted by the Ministry of Education and is optional for students during the final year of primary school (age eleven). Based on the results of the exam, students could transfer to prominent schools for their secondary education.

(Gunawardena, 1994 in Bray, 2007). Since there is a high demand for private tuition among affluent parents, the tuition fees are too high for poor parents to afford (Bray, 2007, 2009).

3.1.3 Parental lack of understanding about the importance of English

The lack of understanding of Sri Lankan parents about the importance of learning English is a great disadvantage for many students. In an appraisal of the bilingual programmes in Jaffna done by Karunakaran (2013), Tamil medium students said that they were not encouraged to enrol in the bilingual programmes because their parents were either ignorant about the programmes or they were illiterate.

The attitude of students about their future job prospects also affects their own motivation for learning English. A survey among university students in Jaffna found that the factors associated with family and relations play an important role in the career choice of students (Anojan and Nimalathasan, 2013). According to the teaching experience of the researcher, low income parents' ignorance about the importance of English is generally reflected in the attitude of their children that they do not need to learn English as they will continue their parents' jobs such as farming, fishing, carpentry, masonry and painting. Such students not only pay less attention to the learning activities in the classroom but also become the source of disturbance to other students who are interested in learning.

3.1.4 Lack of English language exposure in social contexts

From a pedagogical point of view language input and language exposure are important for learners to learn a language effectively (Ismail, 1991). In Sri Lanka, students may get more English language input in the classroom but outside the classroom they are left largely in a non-English environment. Crystal (1997 in Liyanage, 2004) found that the majority of the Sri Lankan population do not use English for any communication. Consequently, students do not have opportunities in their social context to practice what they learn in the classroom. Karunakaran (ibid.) found that students in Jaffna lack an English speaking environment at home and in their social contexts. However, the teachers in his survey said that some bilingual students (from higher socio-economic

backgrounds) are able to have a good command of English because they have opportunities to converse with their parents and family members in English. Denicius (2003) also found that the language progress of children from the middle and upper socio-economic classes in Jaffna tend to surpass those of the lower socio-economic classes because of the English language exposure they get in their home environment.

3.1.5 Lack of access to differentiated learning materials

The aforementioned problems faced by students have negative impacts on them when they start engaging with English learning materials in the secondary school. Authors such as Al-Khairi (2013), Ghadirzadeh et al. (2012) and Aydin (2012) identified the textbook, the curriculum and the course content as demotivational factors for students in learning English when they are not appropriate to the learners. Students become frustrated when they do not understand the learning materials and consequently tend to show their opposition to the learning materials and their motivation for learning is affected (Canagarajah, 1993). In Sri Lankan classrooms, one of the basic problems faced by the students with low ability levels is the absence of choice to experience differentiated learning materials appropriate to them; a factor underscored by the single textbook scheme which is discussed below. This situation frustrates not only the students but also the teachers who struggle to deal with below average students with high content textbooks. Perera et al. (ibid.) note that the assumption in Sri Lanka that equal opportunities to learn English can be provided to students by using the same materials has been challenged. She suggests that this problem has to be addressed by training teachers in material adaptation according to the level of the students being taught (this is discussed further in the section about students' heterogeneity below – 3.2.3).

3.1.6 Problems of teacher shortage

The problem that affects the students most is the lack of access to competent teachers to teach English particularly in rural schools. A humanitarian news and analysis service of the United Nations (IRIN, nd) observed that the shortage of teachers in north Sri Lanka became more evident when thousands of students

began uninterrupted schooling in 2009 after a lapse of years due to the civil war. This shortage of teachers is particularly seen in the rural schools in the subjects of English, mathematics and science. An assistant director of education who participated in the United Nations analysis pointed out that his Education Division which requires 197 teachers of English had only half of the required amount. The impact of the teacher shortage is further evident in the work of Stolyarova (2011) who argued that the education reforms implemented in 1998 in Sri Lanka to introduce English to Grades One through Five to enhance the standard of English learning did not successfully achieve the objectives even after ten years mainly due to the lack of trained and skilled English teachers. However, the Ministry of Education (MoE) in Sri Lanka reported that there were 20,513 English teachers in the country which, according to the Ministry, were sufficient to supply to all the schools in the country (Hemmathagama, 2010). The MoE explained that there was no shortage for English teachers but problems with the management of teachers. It was reported that problems arose with female teachers of English as they were going on maternity leave (Hemmathagama, *ibid.*).

Teachers' unwillingness to teach in certain schools (will be discussed later under the section of teachers) is one of the reasons for the shortage of teachers in remote schools. This unwillingness is caused when teachers are not posted to schools of their choice (Balasooriya, *ibid.*). Besides the unwillingness of teachers to teach in certain schools, the inequitable distribution of qualified teachers among the schools is caused mainly by the politicization of teacher recruitment, transfers and promotion procedures and the lack of incentives to teachers who are willing to work in remote areas (Liyanage, 2013). Moreover, the shortage of teachers is also caused by inefficient planning due to unreliable statistics about the number of teachers needed in certain areas and the lack of co-ordination between the education departments and the teacher training centres (International Labour Office, 1991).

3.2 Issues related to teaching and learning situations (classroom/school)

This section discusses three important problems encountered by the teachers and students in the classroom or in the school: the limited facilities for teaching and learning, the overcrowded classrooms and the problem of heterogeneity in the student population.

3.2.1 Limited facilities for teaching and learning

The limited facilities for teaching and learning English in the classroom is a pressing problem in Sri Lankan schools. This problem affects more the motivation of the teachers than that of the students as the former find it difficult to prepare their lessons without proper resources (Hettiarachchi, 2010). The limited teaching facilities have been a constant problem for learning in developing countries like Sri Lanka such as Nigeria (Adelabu, 2005), Pakistan (Ahmad et al., 2013) and India (Ramachandran et al., 2005). In the case of Sri Lanka, the lack of educational facilities is caused by the uneven distribution of resources among the schools based on the types of schools in the country. In Sri Lanka while ninety per cent of schools come under the administration of the provincial councils, all the prestigious urban schools function under the central government as national schools. The central government allocates more funding and resources to these national schools. Consequently, different extracurricular programmes, more English competent teachers, computers and the internet facilities and various other learning opportunities, provide a more quality education to the students in national schools (Wijeratna, 2002). However, while on the one hand, the students in provincial schools suffer a lack of resources for learning English, on the other hand, students in national schools face difficulties in accessing the available resources and consequently are unable to make optimum use of the resources. In Sri Lankan schools lessons are not conducted in subject specific classrooms. Students follow all their subjects in the same classroom and hence the classroom usually contains the minimum teaching and learning facilities that are necessary and common to all the subjects being taught. The material aids for teaching English such as dictionaries, posters, pictures, reading materials and technological

resources such as the multi-media and over-head projector are generally kept in a common place called the activity room. According to the teaching experience of the researcher, teachers rarely utilized the resources in the activity room mainly because of two reasons. One is the activity rooms are not spacious enough to have group activities for large classes, and the other is that taking students to the activity room is a time consuming task as the teaching time (forty minutes) available is short. Furthermore, not all the schools have an activity room to teach the English language subject as small schools in rural areas do not have sufficient funds to set up such activity rooms and furnish them with the necessary resources.

3.2.2 Overcrowded classrooms

According to Hettiarachchi (ibid.), after the limited facilities for teaching and learning, the second most demotivating factor for the teachers of English in Sri Lanka is the overcrowded classrooms. Researchers such as Blatchford et al. (2002), Hattie (2005) and Pedder (2006) contend that large classes result in teachers struggling to provide a quality teaching and learning environment for their students. Whilst UNICEF (2006) suggest that education in Sri Lanka poses a unique challenge to young minds, as they struggle to learn in overcrowded classrooms. Overcrowded classes are generally found in urban popular schools where the students both from suburban and rural areas come to learn. As stated in the previous section, the prestigious urban schools are equipped with more facilities and maintain high quality outcomes in public examinations. This motivates middle class rural parents to send their children to such schools (Wijeratna, ibid.). However, Perera (2006) refutes the popular belief that big schools with more resources can provide better chances for learning English. Instead she argues that small schools where classes are found with a convenient number¹¹ of students provide more opportunities for teachers to adapt materials according to the varied levels of students' learning abilities and hence more effective learning can take place.

Miller-Whitehead (2003) too argues that small classes encourage teachers, reduce discipline issues, help teachers to identify problems immediately and solve them and provide ample time to cover the syllabus. Though small classes help teachers

to easily identify the learning problems of students or avoid unnecessary issues of discipline, in the Sri Lankan contexts the above mentioned problems such as lack of resources and motivation of students hinder teachers' enthusiasm in the classroom (Hettiarachchi, *ibid.*).

3.2.3 Problem of heterogeneity in student population

The issue of student heterogeneity is one of the key concerns regarding the classroom problems of ELT in Sri Lanka and addressing it has preoccupied several studies (Perera, 2001; De Lanerolle Commission Report, 1973 and Jeyasuriya, 1969 in Perera, *ibid.*; Perera et al., *ibid.*). Perera et al. (*ibid.*) define a heterogeneous language group as 'students of different language abilities being grouped together' in a class (p. 5). Students naturally vary in their learning capacities and this reality cannot be avoided in a language learning classroom. In Sri Lanka, student heterogeneity is more characterised by their 'prior experience or inexperience in the second language' (*ibid.*: 2). Some students come from English speaking family backgrounds while some have access to English only at school. Some students get opportunities to receive basic knowledge of English at their primary schools while others do not get such opportunities especially in rural areas where primary teachers are not competent enough in English to give them a good foundation in English. The heterogeneity of students becomes very obvious when they move to urban schools for their secondary study (De Lanerolle Commission Report, 1973 in Perera, 2001). The situation deteriorates when waves of students move to urban schools to join Grade Six after their success in Grade Five Scholarship Examination. Such students who are good in English make the heterogeneity of the classroom more acute (Perera et al., *ibid.*).

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11. The number of students in small schools classrooms in Sri Lanka vary from twenty to twenty-five. There are classrooms with ten or fifteen students in certain small schools. Compared to the number of students in the urban classrooms which may be around thirty-five or over forty, the number of students in small schools is convenient to teachers. However, classrooms with small numbers of students have to be considered in conjunction with the issues discussed above.

3.3 Issues related to the curriculum

This section presents issues on the textbook such as the single textbook scheme and the textbook content. Regarding the teaching approach, the discussion focuses on the communicative language teaching (CLT) which as dictated by the Ministry of Education is supposed to be the English teaching approach adopted in Sri Lankan classrooms. The problems related to bilingual education and English as a life-skill programme which can be considered as the latest English learning approaches are also presented.

3.3.1 The textbook

It has been argued that the textbook has a ‘vital and positive part’ to play in a language teaching and learning process (Hutchinson and Torres, 1994: 315). According to Wen-Cheng et al. (2011: 91) the textbook assures teachers of ‘a measure of structure, consistency and a logical progression in a class’ and for learners, it fulfils their ‘needs or expectations of having something concrete to work from and take home for further study.’ However, as Swan (1992) notes, the textbook also has negative aspects as it may absolve teachers’ responsibility of their daily decision making about what to teach and how to teach. Teachers may just rely on the textbook believing that the author has produced something wise and useful for his or her students which unfortunately is not always true (Swan, *ibid.*).

3.3.1.1 Single textbook scheme

In Sri Lanka, the textbook has been found to be a demotivating factor which affects not only teachers’ active involvement in the classroom, but also inhibits students’ interest in learning. It is primarily due to the single textbook scheme implemented by the Sri Lankan government. The government issues free textbooks for all the subjects to all the students from grade One to Eleven under the Free Textbook Scheme of 1980 (Jayakody, 2006). However, distributing free textbooks to over 3.8 million students in about ten thousand schools and the absence of private sector for textbook publications have restricted the students to the use of just one book per subject. Further the state monopoly on single

textbook production which inhibited the development of textbook writers and the absence of competition in textbook publications have accounted for the low quality textbook production (Karunaratne, 2003).

Adding to this, students are instructed to use the textbook carefully and return it to the school when they move on to the next grade so that the junior students can use the textbook in successive years. A small-scale survey evaluation (Aloysius, 2010) of a textbook conducted by the researcher in Jaffna for his postgraduate qualification discovered that the teacher participants had contrasting views about the textbook. On the one hand, they believed that reusing the textbooks each year led to the government reducing its funding to the education sector, and on the other hand, they intimated that it was a practical solution to deal with the delay in the distribution of new free textbooks to students at the beginning of the academic year. A report by the London based Overseas Development Institute stated that the Sri Lankan education system is in need of more efficient distribution mechanism to ensure that all schools particularly the rural schools receive the required textbooks on time (Policy Brief 11, 2006). The teachers in the textbook evaluation survey (Aloysius, *ibid.*) also said that the used textbooks which were given to students, in most cases were either torn or scribbled on or dog-eared by the first user. The second and the third users got the book in such a poor condition that their motivation for learning was affected.

3.3.1.2 Content of the textbook

i. Language content

According to the textbook evaluation survey participants (Aloysius 2010), low-performing students are not able to enjoy the comprehension texts of the textbook as they often contain difficult structural patterns and vocabulary. As a result of this, the teachers too find it difficult to utilize the textbook effectively to teach English to their students. The teachers in Aloysius's study (*ibid.*) maintained that they try their best to make the content easy for students by explaining it in their first language, but the time limit of a single lesson (forty minutes) often forces them to ignore students' problems and try to cover some portion of the materials for the sake of completing the syllabus. However, the teachers of the students

with higher ability levels find their job easier as those students require very little help from the teachers to understand the textbook.

ii. Structural content of the textbook

The lessons in the textbook are based on comprehension texts on interesting topics which provide students with a kind of scaffolding around which the language gradually develops (Bourke, 2006). However the textbooks concentrate more on reading and writing skills in view of the need for students to sit an English exam. The teachers of English in the textbook evaluation survey (Aloysius, *ibid.*) said that there were too many activities for developing reading and writing skills which on the one hand created obstacles for the teachers to complete the syllabus within the stipulated time and on the other hand made the lessons less communicative and more teacher-centred since activities on speaking and listening skills are largely omitted. The free textbook scheme with one textbook made available for each subject has prevented students from accessing a wider range of learning resources and opportunities. All the students in the same class, irrespective of their different levels of learning ability and intellectual capacities, use a single type of textbook which may be an advantage to higher ability students and a disadvantage to lower ability learners because the textbook is not differentiated according to student ability (Karunaratne, *ibid.*). Further, the effective teaching of the teachers of English is very much impeded by the absence of some necessary teaching components such as CDs, audio or video materials which can be used in addition to the core textbook. Teachers in Aloysius's study (*ibid.*) said that the textbook helps students particularly the students with higher learning ability to prepare for the exam as far as the exam paper is designed to suit the textbook. However, they find it difficult to relate the language learned to real life situations. Hence the immediate outcome such as getting through the exam may be facilitated by the textbook, but durable impacts of language learning needs a considerable amount of input and exposure (Ismail, 1991) other than that found in the textbook and the classroom.

3.3.2 Language teaching approach

3.3.2.1 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Textbooks in Sri Lanka are said to have been designed on communicative principles and have completely replaced the structurally-based language course (Mosback, 1990) which had been in use for a few decades in Sri Lanka. However, as previously stated, the important aspects of the content of the current textbooks such as the large neglect of the activities that can improve students' speaking and listening skills, and the difficult language content for learners with lower ability levels suggest what is contrary to a communicative textbook.

Moreover the classroom beliefs and practice of teachers and the learning engagement of students which were deeply rooted in their socio-cultural and religious background still prevail in Sri Lankan classrooms. Canagarajah (ibid.) argues that the learning habits of contemporary students such as their desire to learn the abstract rules of the English language from the teacher or practise them repeatedly in grammar exercises, or memorise the language rules are largely teacher-centred which represents the historical temple schools of Sri Lanka. In the early Sri Lankan society the knowledge was orally passed by the teacher (guru) to students (disciples) who sat at their feet; the disciples were expected to listen to their guru with loyalty and obedience, memorise accurately the information transmitted and preserve it without corruption. Canagarajah further argues that such teacher-student relationship will produce passive students who may revise whatever they learn in the classroom in order to get through the examination but are unlikely to search for new things on their own to enhance their learning. This classroom situation where students have no opportunities to express their views not only makes them passive learners but also leaves teachers inattentive to the 'deeper issues' of their learning (Richards, 2008: 25).

As a modern approach in language learning worldwide, the norms and beliefs catering for the communicative language teaching (CLT) are likely to come in conflict with the beliefs and practices of the traditional classroom (Ellis, 1996); the norms such as the role of the teacher as a facilitator rather than an all-knowing

personality of knowledge, the freedom of students to be more autonomous in their learning strategies, having more authentic and meaningful language exchanges rather than relying on pre-planned activities, and giving more importance to fluency than accuracy of speaking (Ellis, 1996; Brown, 1994 and Larsen-Freeman, 2000 in Abebe et al., 2012).

From all what said above, Perera (2001) found the following three points regarding the CLT in Sri Lankan classrooms:

- The content of the textbook is not communicative enough to conduct the CLT lessons out of it.
- The students are not accustomed to the CLT lessons.
- The teachers need to be informed more about the CLT approach.

These issues are discussed below.

3.3.3 Challenges for CLT

3.3.3.1 Lack of teacher student interaction and relationship with materials

Perera (ibid.) having noticed a lack of interaction between teachers and students, conducted research on the CLT in Sri Lankan schools. Her study revealed two realities; one is the existence of a highly heterogeneous group of students, not only in levels of their learning abilities, but also in their socio-cultural and religious backgrounds. The other is the availability of the same learning materials for such a heterogeneous group of students. Perera challenges the general assumption that the Sri Lankan students who are of different cultural, religious and ethnic background can be provided with equal opportunities to learn English by implementing the same learning materials and the same language teaching approaches. She argues that this has already resulted in a complex relationship between teacher, students and materials and caused a failure in English language learning. Karunaratne (2008) also found that the encouraging teacher-student interaction which can help and motivate the learners to work with the English language (Richards and Rodgers, 2001) is lacking in the more teacher dominant traditional classrooms of Sri Lanka.

3.3.3.2 Teacher-centred and exam-oriented curriculum

Government educational reforms in Sri Lanka proposed a student-centred approach in teaching at the secondary level but the teachers largely rely on ‘chalk-and-talk’ techniques making the textbook their central focus to plan their teaching. Hence the students are not introduced to broader knowledge beyond the contents of their textbooks (Wickrema and Colenso, 2003). Karunaratne’s (ibid.) study affirms that English language teaching (ELT) enterprise at schools in Sri Lanka is more teacher-centred than pupil-centred. His study was conducted under three important criteria which are considered to be the main principles or strategies of the communicative language teaching (CLT): variety of teaching materials, reasonable use of the students’ mother tongue and a pupil-centred teaching approach. The study revealed that the classroom textbook was the only source for language learning and the classroom activities were largely carried out in the mother tongue. The striking finding of the study is that students were more comfortable with teacher-centred language teaching which is not at all a characteristic of the CLT (Brown, 1994 in Abebe et al., ibid.).

According to Karunaratne, teacher over dependency on the mother tongue implies the difficulty of teachers in handling their teaching activities in English, and so they use it as a strategy to conceal their lack of competency in English.

Considerable use of the mother tongue in the CLT is considered as a resource to facilitate teaching (Richards and Rodgers, 2001) but in the Sri Lankan situation, the use of mother tongue by students and teachers in the classroom is a ‘comfort zone’ or their ‘second nature’ (Karunaratne, ibid.).

Karunaratne (ibid.) identified that the primary objective of ELT in Sri Lankan public schools is to prepare students to get through the state examination i.e., G.C.E. O/L. Therefore the teaching materials only highlight the reading and writing skills in which the students are tested in the national examination. The textbook in the Sri Lankan classroom functions both as the syllabus and the textbook. The syllabus is a set of objectives and the textbook is a systematic instrument in the hands of teachers to achieve these objectives laid out in the syllabus. In the case of Sri Lanka the textbook is not only the source of materials

for teachers to teach English, but also provides them with information and guidance to teach. Hence the textbook is the syllabus and ‘completing the syllabus means the completion of the textbook’ (Karunaratne, *ibid*: 7) and consequently, the teachers often rush through the textbook in order to complete it on time with the aim of preparing the students for the exam. Therefore Karunaratne argues that the objective of the English language teaching curriculum in Sri Lanka i.e., to develop students’ communicative competence in view of promoting national harmony and securing job opportunities for the young generation has not been achieved.

3.3.4 Problems related to the latest English teaching/learning strategies

Chapter Two (2.3.1.2) presented bilingual education and the English as a life-skill programme as the current English teaching/learning strategies in Sri Lankan classrooms. Though bilingual education was reintroduced to enhance students’ proficiency in English, its objective is challenged as only a few schools implement it. As already said in Chapter Two, only thirty-six schools follow the bilingual education programme in the district of Jaffna (MoE, 2004) which is less than ten per cent of the total number of the schools in the district. The shortage of suitably qualified competent English teachers to deliver the bilingual education programme and the lack of motivation among students for learning English mainly due to their limited knowledge of English are the primary reasons why more schools are unable to implement bilingual education (Mahawatha, 2012; Karunakaran, 2013). Little and Hettige, (2006 in Little, 2007: 203) identified an important problem the education system faces in carrying out bilingual education:

...a pressing obstacle is the proficiency of teachers, many of whom were schooled at a time when English was a subject of study not used extensively in wider society. The current introduction of English as medium of instruction for some subjects is already biased towards schools in the Western province.

According to the needs analysis conducted by the National Institute of Education (2007), the most urgent needs are a sound national policy on bilingual education, sufficient qualified teachers to handle their subjects both in their first and English languages and adequate, appropriate textbooks.

Regarding the English as a life-skill programme (ELSP), since its inception in 2009, many efforts such as the training of Master Trainers, production of a Teacher Guide for Spoken English and learning materials and conducting necessary seminars and workshops for teachers throughout Sri Lanka have been taken by the government in order to integrate a listening and speaking part in the O/L examination of 2015 for the first time (Fernando, 2013). However, this did not happen as expected. Neither the Presidential Task Force nor the Ministry of Education seems to be interested in promoting ELSP further. It can be argued that the ELSP being a Presidential Initiative and not implemented by the Ministry of Education may fail to attract the necessary support or appreciation from various levels of the education system. Further, since the president who initiated the ELSP is no longer in power, the future of this programme is unpredictable.

3.4 Issues related to teachers

The problems related to the recruitment, education and the deployment of teachers of English are discussed in this section. The role of the in-service advisors and other officials who conduct most of the in-service teacher education programmes and the problems related to them are presented here. The factors which demotivate the teachers are also explored.

3.4.1 Recruitment, education and deployment of teachers

How the teachers are recruited, educated and deployed in the education system of Sri Lanka was explained in the teacher education section of Chapter Two (2.3.2). This section presents the problems the teachers undergo at these stages.

3.4.1.1 Recruitment and deployment of teachers

The current policies related to the recruitment and deployment of teachers mandate that all teachers should serve in a remote or rural school for a period determined by the government (minimum three years). It is the right of the teachers to move to different schools when they complete the mandatory period of service. However, when they move to different schools they demand transfers to schools that are more convenient to them on the basis of certain issues such as

being near their home towns, health and family reasons such as their children's education, needing to care for their parents and the employment of their spouse. If their requests are not fulfilled they become frustrated in teaching (Balasooriya, *ibid.*) and consequently it affects the effectiveness of their teaching.

The national policy on teacher transfers in Sri Lanka has drawn in such a way that teachers serve at all different types of schools. It is hoped that this policy will ensure a more equitable distribution of teachers among schools and even the most rural schools will eventually receive the service of qualified and experienced teachers. However, in practice the teachers, particularly the new teachers find that the remote schools are mostly allocated to them. Consequently, such schools get teachers who are qualified but have insufficient classroom experience (Gaynor, 1998).

A possible explanation for the policies not being observed in practice can be found in the fact that the education system becomes more politicized and corrupted in Sri Lanka. Though the education system has the National and Provincial Transfer Boards and the Teacher Transfer Committees for coordinating teacher transfers, the authorities fail to observe the regulations for teacher transfers (TISL, 2009). Eighty-five per cent of teachers and ninety per cent of officers who were interviewed in a study conducted by TISL (*ibid.*) said that teacher transfers are affected through politicians rather than the transfer criteria. Teachers without political clout are forced to spend years in remote rural schools without getting a chance to move to urban schools while others successfully avoid being posted to distant areas. The study further found that teacher demands for transfers to their preferred schools have resulted in the school system becoming polarized between urban and rural schools with the urban schools having more teachers than required. Consequently, there is a shortage of qualified teachers in remote rural schools. Adding to this, parents prefer to send their children to urban schools as they believe that these schools provide a better education and thereby their children would enter university or find good employment. As a result, small rural schools become smaller and consequently they are closed down (*ibid.*). The shortage of teachers in small rural schools has caused a 'crisis of small schools'

and the consequences of the crisis are poor quality of teaching, low achievement levels, lack of attention from the authorities, low demands from parents and negative attitudes of teachers (Balasooriya, 2004). The lack of proper teacher deployment practices in the education system of Sri Lanka has also caused over population or a shortage of teachers in certain schools. For example, in 2010 there were overall 615 excess teachers in Sinhala-medium National Schools and the overall deficit for teachers in Tamil-medium National Schools was 483 (Balasooriya, 2013).

Another difficulty is that in Sri Lanka teacher recruitment does not match the teacher requirements of the country's school system. The National Colleges of Education and universities which provide most of the teachers to the school system take in low numbers of candidates which causes subject-specific teacher shortages for subjects such as Science, Maths, English, and technical and aesthetic subjects (Balasooriya, *ibid*).

3.4.1.2 Education of teachers

i. Initial teacher education

There are a number of issues concerning the education of teachers. The initial or pre-service teacher education is provided by National Colleges of Education (NCOE) and Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) (Wijesekera, 2012). University graduates who become teachers for the subjects in which they specialized in the university are generally not given any teacher training (Liyanage, *ibid.*). There are a small number of professional development courses available in the National Institute of Education (NIE) and some universities, but teachers rarely get opportunities to follow these courses. Hence, apart from the initial teacher education programmes, teachers of English do not have any other opportunities to upgrade their professional standards (Wijesekera, *ibid.*) except the continuous professional development (CPD) provided through seminars and workshops conducted by the in-service advisors.

ii. Continuous professional development (CPD)

CPD is provided through a number of in-service teacher education programmes. The in-service teacher education programmes can be broadly classified into two categories: long-term programmes and short-term programmes (Gunawardhane, *ibid.*).

a) Long-term programmes

The long-term in-service teacher development courses are provided by universities, NIE and TTCs. University programmes are mainly designed for graduate teachers. NIE and TTCs conduct programmes for non-graduate teachers as well as graduate teachers (*ibid.*) (2.3.2.2).

The problem the teachers of English face in following the long-term CPD is the rare opportunities available as the institutions take in only a small number of candidates for the programme. Another problem is the difficulty teachers encounter in getting necessary leave from their school as the school administration is reluctant to release individual teachers due to the shortage of teachers in school. Regarding the quality of the teacher education programmes, evaluation studies reveal that the teachers receive poor quality training (Perera 2008, 2009 and Jayaweera, 2010 in Liyanage, *ibid.*). The consequences of the poor quality teacher training has resulted in the dissatisfaction of students who found the lessons boring, teachers negligent of their education and the schooling provided unattractive (Jayaweera and Gunawardana, 2009 in Liyanage, *ibid.*).

b) Short-term programmes

Short-term in-service teacher development programmes are of different types which are mainly provided by the zonal Department of Education under the cascade model (also called the old Lancastrian Model). In this model, a number of people are trained at the top level and they are expected to take it to the next level. Accordingly, when a teacher receives some instruction regarding a programme, it may be transferred to him/her by the second or the third or the fourth person. The disadvantage in this model is that the message may be

misinterpreted as it is passed on to the teacher at grassroots level after many stages. Hence, teachers very rarely get opportunities to receive first-hand instruction from specialists and experts (Samaraweera, *ibid.*, Gunawardhane, 2011).

Short-term Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes are also provided by the Regional English Support Centres (RESCs). There are thirty RESCs island-wide and the training instructors are trained by the National Institute of Education (NIE). RESCs also serve as a meeting point for English teachers of the region to exchange their experiences (Gunawardhane, *ibid.*).

Besides the problem of cascade model, teachers consider the in-service advisors (ISAs) who mainly run the short-term continuous professional development (CPD) programmes as inefficient in their profession (see next section). However, teachers also do not take their own initiatives to develop themselves but solely depend on the available CPD programmes. This contention is supported by Cumaranatunge (2001) who argues that teachers and schools almost completely depend on others for staff development. Her study revealed that about eighty per cent of continuous teacher education is provided by the Ministry of Education or NIE.

iii. Problems related to In-Service-Advisors (ISAs)

The National Institute of Education (NIE) train the ISAs to broaden their knowledge of curriculum reforms, syllabus revisions and to improve their teaching skills through innovative methods. Wijesekera (*ibid.*) in his study views the ISAs as the important conduit between the authorities and the teachers in delivering the instruction regarding new reforms, change of curricula and methodology. The teachers of English in Sri Lanka not only need support in issues regarding methodology and new reforms but also in the English subject as teachers of English have usually been educated in his/her mother tongue. The ISAs are the only professional support for teachers of English in remote areas where they do not have access to any other professional development programmes. However the number of available ISAs does not match the

overwhelming need for teacher development. According to the Ministry of Education (in Wijesekera, *ibid.*) there were about twenty thousand teachers of English more than a decade ago in Sri Lanka, but the total number of ISAs available at that time was a mere 214. Such an imbalance results in teachers being dissatisfied with the contribution of the ISAs. This is revealed in Wijesekera's (*ibid.*) survey where teachers of English perceive that the contribution of ISAs is not compatible to the roles assigned to them:

- The contribution of ISAs to the development of the quality of English language teaching is not satisfactory
- ISAs themselves are not aware of their roles
- ISAs are in need of attitudinal change as they find fault with teachers rather than giving guidance
- ISAs are not provided with necessary facilities, resources and training
- Political influence should have no place in the appointment of ISAs
- Not only educational qualifications but also experience and personalities should be considered in the selection of ISAs.

3.4.2 Lack of motivation of teachers

Gardner (2007) says that teacher motivation is an important variable which can strongly influence learner motivation in second language acquisition. However, the education system in Sri Lanka has experienced a decline in teacher motivation. Therefore it has been argued that 'teacher status, motivation and work attitudes have deteriorated over the past few years and the importance of re-motivating and improving the attitudes of teachers should be a national priority' (World Bank Report, 2006: 60). This is supported by the study of Hettiarachchi (*ibid.*) among the teachers of English in Sri Lanka which calls for the immediate attention of the education policy makers of the country to address the diminishing force of teacher motivation. According to Hettiarachchi, limited facilities for teaching and learning activities in the classroom, classes with large numbers of learners, preparing School Based Assessments for students, textbooks not suitable to students with low ability levels and issues regarding teaching approaches and methods were the main causes that demotivated the Sri Lankan teachers of English in their profession. Besides, there are also demotivating issues related to

administration such as inefficiency in school administration and zonal Department of Education (DoE), difficulty in obtaining teacher transfers and limited parental involvement in students' performance.

However, Hettiarachchi also found that success of students in language learning, their act of teaching, matters related to the role of teaching and the position of English in the country which gives prestigious social position and special recognition for teachers who teach the language become motivational forces for some teachers.

3.4.3 Inefficiency of administration (school and zonal DoE)

Hettiarachchi's (ibid.) study found that teachers of English were critical of the service given by the school administration and their dissatisfaction made them so frustrated that they described the school administration as corrupted or politicized. These teachers argued that their principals do not have positive attitudes towards teachers of English or do not sufficiently help them perform their teaching effectively. As highlighted previously the teachers blame the school administration for providing few facilities to the teaching and learning process that they are unable to access the activity room or the computer or library facilities when students actually need them.

Besides being dissatisfied with the school administration, teachers also find fault with the services provided by the zonal Department of Education (DoE) which is responsible for their salary, incentives and leave. Teachers contend that the quality of the service is so inefficient that they have to visit the zonal DoE so many times to get some work done (ibid).

3.4.4 Low salary and lack of incentives

Liyanage (ibid.) argues that teacher salaries are not attractive in Sri Lanka and this has badly affected the motivation and the work attitudes of teachers over the past few years.

Balasooriya (ibid.) notes that the unwillingness of teachers to work in rural or remote schools is partly because of the lack of incentives to such teachers. Teacher trade unions in Sri Lanka repeatedly appeal to the Salaries and Cadres Commission (SCC) for a pay rise, but the SCC rejects the demand of the teachers saying that it would place a heavy economic burden on the government. The teacher trade unions have employed various means such as not attending the A/L exam paper marking and launching a sick note campaign to make the government respond to their cause. However, the government has not yet solved the problem of low teacher salaries in Sri Lanka (Dissanayake, 2014).

3.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has shown that there are various problems and challenges related to English language teaching in the mainstream education of Sri Lanka. These problems were revealed as being connected to the students, the classroom, the curriculum and the teachers. Various research conducted in the field of education in Sri Lanka suggested ways and means and the Ministry of Education took necessary measures to address these problems. However, one can find the education system in Sri Lanka still being affected by the same problems and challenges. The reason for the continuous challenges and setbacks in education is likely to lie with the unequal provision and the politicized nature of education which was explained in Chapter Two.

The central focus of the current study i.e., the English teaching efficacy, along with many classroom problems, is also subject to the issues of the unequal provision and the politicized nature of education in Sri Lanka. Thus investigating how various classroom problems affect the teaching efficacy of the teachers of English, and finding solutions for those problems will not address the problem of effective teaching of English sufficiently. Instead, the elements of the unequal

provision of the education which are specifically related to the effective teaching of English need to be identified before investigating how those elements affect the efficacy of the teachers of English. In the same manner the political issues which especially become detrimental to the teaching efficacy of the teachers of English need to be identified. Therefore identifying the problems which are related to the effective teaching of English will facilitate the current study to be conducted effectively.

4. Literature Review on Effective Teaching of English and Teacher Efficacy

Introduction

The literature review is informed by school, college and university perspectives on effective teaching of English as well as teacher efficacy. These range of sources are international in focus as there is a dearth of literature in Sri Lanka concerning these areas.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section reviews the literature on effective teaching of English. It presents the literature which defines effective teaching in general and then it follows with the literature on effective language teaching and language teachers in particular i.e., the second language or more specifically English language teaching. This section also reviews studies which address teacher effectiveness and that concentrate on the pre-service and in-service professional development of teachers. The section concludes with a review of Sri Lankan-based literature on effective teaching of English. The second section reviews literature on teacher efficacy in order to present a general understanding of the same in relation to the current study. This section also presents the theoretical perspectives of teacher efficacy, the relationship between teacher efficacy and positive teacher outcomes, student motivation, achievement and teacher effectiveness. The third section presents the key aspects of the literature review and makes connections with the current study followed by the summary of the chapter.

4.1 Effective teaching of English

4.1.1 Defining effective teaching

‘Defining effective teaching is not easy’ (Coe et al., 2014: 2). Academic research highlights an excess of definitions of effective teaching or an effective teacher. This section generates some themes from the literature to accommodate different definitions of effective teaching as viewed by different authors.

4.1.1.1 Increasing students’ learning

Clark (1993) states that effective teaching is connected to someone who can increase student knowledge, but defining an effective teacher goes beyond this. Authors have similar thoughts as Clark on effective teaching such as improving students’ achievement (Coe et al., 2014), increasing their learning potential (Mart, 2013) and making a difference in improving their learning (Leithwood, 2004).

4.1.1.2 Ability to instruct heterogeneous students

For Vogt (1984) the effectiveness of a teacher is his/her ability to instruct different students of different abilities. According to the information from the American Institutes of Research database (2006), published by Bill & Melinda Gates foundation, effective teaching is to seek strategies to cater for all the students in a mixed-ability classroom. Levy (2008) says that effective teaching is meeting the needs of all students through differentiated instruction.

4.1.1.3 Planning and presenting the lesson

According to Million (1987), effectiveness depends on how the lesson is designed and delivered. For Jones (1998) effective teaching is to plan the lesson well. Bulger et al. (2002) hold a similar view arguing that effective teaching is to organize the content of the lesson and present it efficiently.

4.1.1.4 Exercising various classroom practices

Wenglinsky (2000), Darling-Hammond et al., (2002), Boaler and Staples (2008) and Rutledge et al. (2015) highlight classroom practices such as quality instruction, rigorous and challenging curriculum content and high teacher expectations (Wilcox and Angelis 2011) which promote higher order thinking

(Department of Education & Training, Melbourne, 2005), active participation and a culture of learning (including personalized learning) amongst high and low-performing students. Further classroom practices which define effective teaching are motivating and engaging all students in learning, acknowledging individual differences of the students, using a range of pedagogies, monitoring students' progress and giving them feedback (Report of Department of Education & Training, Australia, 2009).

4.1.1.5 'What' and 'How' to teach

Neil (1991) contends that there are two important aspects if teaching is to be effective: 'what' (the knowledge of the subject matter) and 'how' (the skills to teach the subject matter). An effective teacher must possess a professional knowledge base of the subject matter along with 'a lot of instructional strategies and techniques' (Wichadee, 2010: 2) to deliver the subject knowledge successfully. Neil (ibid.) says that teaching is not a unitary act but includes learning which is voluntary on the part of learners and hence it is not easy for teachers to persuade students and sell their ideas to them unless they present their ideas interestingly and enthusiastically. This supports earlier contentions by Dewey (1933, 1938 cited in Chen and Lin, 2009: 223) who states that 'an effective teacher is not only a person who conveys knowledge to the students, but also an artist whose practices defy notions of what is good or bad as well as what is right or wrong'. Thus the teacher as a knowledgeable artist also seeks to deliver their subject in the best way possible to enhance student learning.

Effective teachers undertake in-depth coverage of fewer topics in a subject area rather than covering all topics superficially in order for key concepts in that discipline to be understood (Department of Education & Training, Melbourne, 2005: 5).

From the above perspectives 'what' and 'how' to teach becomes very essential in effective teaching.

4.1.1.6 Ability to connect teachers, students and lesson

Palmer (1999) gives a totally different definition for an effective teacher from a different point of view. He explicitly rejects the idea of techniques or skills in delivering the subject matter, but emphasises the capability of the teacher to make a connection among the teacher, students and the subject being studied:

Good teaching isn't about techniques. I've asked students around the country to describe their good teachers to me. Some of them describe people who lecture all the time, some of them describe people who do little other than facilitate group process, and others describe everything in between. But all of them describe people who have some sort of connective capacity, who connect themselves to their students, their students to each other, and everyone to the subject being studied (p. 27).

The above description indicates that how teachers approach their students, the subject and their work is more important than their knowledge and skills (Hassett, 2000).

The aforementioned different themes on the definition of effective teaching show that a single standard definition cannot express the various aspects of effective teaching since teaching itself undergoes rapid changes every day.

An abundance of literature has examined the effective characteristics of teachers in general such as mastery in subject-matter, explaining the subject clearly, having good pedagogical knowledge, having good communication skills, being friendly, being available and helpful to students, providing a good classroom climate and having a good teaching experience and being self-reflective (Calabria 1960 and Feldman, 1976 in Shishavan and Sadeghi, 2009; Feldman, 1988; Murray, 1991 in Chen, 2012; Adams and Pierce, 1999; Kyriakides, Campbell and Christfido, 2002). (Section 4.1.3.2 presents these attributes under different themes and explains what is involved in promoting these attributes in the Sri Lankan context.) These characteristics can be considered common to the teachers of all subjects. However, the discipline-specific literature, i.e., in relation to the current doctoral research on the effective characteristics of foreign language teachers (i.e., teachers who teach a language subject as a foreign language) are scarce because of the distinctive nature of language teaching and teachers (Brosh, 1996; Schulz, 2000). Thus, before reviewing the available literature on the characteristics of effective

language teachers, it is appropriate to understand the distinctive nature and characteristics of language teaching and teachers.

4.1.2 Distinctiveness of language teaching and teachers

This section reviews the work of five authors (Hammadou and Bernhardt, 1987; Grossman and Shulman, 1994; Borg, 2006; Lee, 2010 and Medina and Arcila, 2013) whose studies generate three different themes (explained below) which elaborate the distinctiveness of language teaching and teachers.

4.1.2.1 Unique professional situation of second language teaching

Hammadou and Bernhardt (1987) contend that becoming and being a foreign language teacher is in many ways unique and different from teachers of other subjects as the emphasis is on the medium of language instruction.

In foreign language teaching, the content and the process for learning the content are the same. In other words, in foreign language teaching the medium is the message (p. 301).

They identify five major difficulties which make foreign language teaching a unique task. As well as outlining these difficulties, aspects that need to be improved in the Sri Lankan teaching context are highlighted:

a) The nature of the subject matter itself:

Hammadou and Bernhardt (1987) says that a second language is primarily instructed in the same second language itself in which the students are not yet proficient. Whereas a science teacher can explain the subject matter mostly in the first language (L1) of the students, second language teachers, in order to provide genuine instruction in communication have to use the same second language, even though the students may find it difficult to understand. However, English as a second language (EL2) instruction in Sri Lankan classrooms, except in bilingual classrooms, mostly takes place in L1 of the students. It is mainly because of the style of the EL2 curriculum which prioritizes only the reading and the writing skills. The inclusion of the other language skills, particularly the speaking skill, in the curriculum for both instruction and examination may increase the use of second language (L2) in the classroom.

- b) The interaction patterns necessary to provide instruction in the subject matter:
 “The nature of the subject matter itself demands a different type of instructional pattern from that which would be conventionally expected in most other teaching situations’ (p. 301). An L2 teacher who is expected to enhance students’ communicative competence cannot interact with the students like a science teacher interacting with his or her students. The reason given by Hammadou and Bernhardt (1987) is that the communicative competence or ‘...conversation is a process of negotiation whereby conversational partners have fairly equal status and opportunity to interact’ (p. 301). This implies that L2 teachers in Sri Lanka not only need to have the speaking competence in the target language but also need to know the techniques to facilitate conversational interactions among students and between the teacher and students.
- c) Difficulties in gaining increased subject matter knowledge:
 Teachers of subjects other than foreign languages have varieties of resources and opportunities to increase the knowledge of their subject matter. L2 teachers ‘do not have (...) foreign language resources readily available [or] do not necessarily have another person at their side with whom they can interact and from whom they can gain access to the latest language expressions’ (p. 302). In the Sri Lankan context teachers find it difficult not only to access language resources but also ordinary English language exposure. The continuous professional development programmes can remedy this difficulty to some extent by providing necessary language resources to the teachers.
- d) A dearth of colleagues in the same subject matter:
 While a secondary teacher generally has a colleague or two with the same subject, a second language (L2) teacher rarely has another colleague (except in schools with large numbers of students) who teaches the same language. This is very relevant in the Sri Lankan context where most of the teachers in remote rural or small schools are teaching as the sole teacher of English in their school while the urban schools have more than the necessary number of teachers. It implies that the Ministry of Education in Sri Lanka needs to observe more efficient teacher deployment regulations.

- e) The problematic nature of outside support for learning the subject matter (ibid.):

‘Language learning always takes place within a cultural environment’ (p. 302). It is very difficult for L2 teachers to provide their students with such an environment where naturalistic language learning can occur. This is also very relevant to the Sri Lankan context as both teachers and students are left largely in a non-English environment outside the classroom. Hence the efforts of the teacher are crucial to creating a suitable language learning environment for the students within the classroom.

The unique professional situation outlined by Hammadou and Bernhardt (ibid.) led them to investigate the teacher preparation programmes of their time. They found that generic teacher preparation programmes inadequately address the needs of the future foreign language teachers and offers little to their professional development. English teaching in Sri Lanka faces the same challenge. The teacher education programmes in Sri Lanka need to improve the pedagogical instruction on English communicative language teaching which may give them some insights to promote more communicative interaction with students in the classrooms (see sections 3.3.2 and 3.3.3 of Chapter Three).

The work of Grossman and Shulman (1994) also notably commented on the unique professional situation and complexity of the subject matter of English language teaching.

As an inherently ambiguous subject, which is less hierarchically organised than Maths and encompasses a variety of sub-domains, English may offer teachers greater freedom within the confines of the classroom. As it would be difficult, if not impossible, for teachers to cover all of the territory encompassed by the subject of English,...(p. 4).

As viewed by Grossman and Shulman, though the English language subject offers greater freedom to teachers to handle the lesson in the classroom, as far as the English classrooms in Sri Lanka are concerned the researcher could say from his previous English teaching experience that the freedom of teachers to teach autonomously is very much restricted as they are expected to base their teaching primarily on the prescribed national textbook in view of preparing the students for the English exam. Hence, the unique professional situation of English language

teaching on the one hand, demands changes in Sri Lankan teacher education programmes and on the other hand, emphasises the need of giving more freedom to teachers of English in the classroom.

4.1.2.2 Distinctive characteristics of language teachers

The work of Borg (2006) aimed to understand what it means to be a language teacher by examining ways in which language teachers are seen to be different from teachers of other subjects. Two hundred practicing and prospective language teachers defined the distinctiveness of language teachers. Borg's study identified eleven key distinctive characteristics of language teachers:

<i>The nature of the subject</i>	more dynamic than other subjects at it is more relevant to real life
<i>The content of teaching</i>	has a very wide and complex area
<i>The teaching methodology</i>	it is more diverse and demands more student involvement
<i>Teacher-learner relationship</i>	more communication between the teacher and learners
<i>Non-native issues</i>	teachers and learners work with languages other than their mother tongue
<i>Teachers' characteristics</i>	creativity, flexibility, enthusiasm
<i>Training</i>	wide range of qualifications
<i>Status</i>	often lower status is awarded to language teachers
<i>Errors</i>	incorrect input by learners is more acceptable
<i>Student body</i>	even adults study languages
<i>Commercialization</i>	driven by commercial forces (p. 24).

Building on the study of Borg (ibid.), Lee (2010) collected through a questionnaire, perceptions of the unique characteristics of language teachers from 163 college level English as foreign language students in Japan. The students

perceived their language teachers to be unique from teachers from other subjects under four dimensions:

- a) *The nature of the subject matter* - the content and medium of instruction are the same and teachers and students have to work in a language in which students are not yet competent.
- b) *The content of teaching* - besides the four skills of the language, teachers need to develop students' communication and the target cultural knowledge.
- c) *Teaching approach* - teachers need to maximise students' involvement in communication.
- d) *Teacher personality* - positive attitudes and enthusiasm of teachers (p. 38).

Both Borg and Lee highlight a particular aspect i.e., the English communicative competence of students which is not primarily considered in the English as a second language curriculum in Sri Lanka. This particular characteristic of English language is positively connected to the other characteristics. It can be argued that when the Sri Lanka education system gives due importance to the communicative aspect of the English curriculum, it is likely that the other characteristics would naturally be incorporated into the curriculum and thereby make the curriculum more suitable and beneficial to the students.

4.1.2.3 Context-specific language teaching

One of the important contributions of Borg's work to future research in the second language teaching and learning is the need to define language teachers' distinctive characteristics in relation to specific contexts rather than globally. Lee's (2010) study also affirms that the profession of foreign language teachers is dependent on the specific socio-cultural and educational contexts in which they are working. Lee's study is supported in turn by Medina and Arcila (2013) whose research investigated the socio-cultural factors involved in the teaching of English as a foreign language in rural areas of Colombia. They found that the teachers in rural areas, in contrast to those in urban areas, were able to 'find opportunities to

enhance their professional action in being familiar with the socio-cultural factors of the community they work with' (p. 31). Hence from the work of Hammadou and Bernhardt (1987) till the very recent work of Medina and Arcila (2013), many authors have found the same idea that the context-specific teacher development is essential for language teachers.

This implies in the context of Sri Lanka, the need for investigating to what extent the existing English language curriculum is context-specific. This is salient as the Sri Lankan student populace which is multi-cultural, ethnic and religious are not provided with differentiated learning materials (textbook) as the single textbook scheme is nationally enforced in the education system of Sri Lanka. Thus it is important to understand the challenges faced by teachers and for English as a second language programme to become specific to the multivariate contexts of Sri Lankan students, and in particular those in the northern province of Jaffna.

4.1.3 Characteristics of effective language teachers

This section begins by reviewing the literature on the characteristics of effective language teachers based on the personal experiences and professional insights of some authors. This is followed by a review of research carried out among teachers and students to investigate the characteristics of effective language teachers. As mentioned before since literature concerning effective language teaching is limited, some objectives of language teacher education programmes which indirectly speak of effective language teacher characteristics are also reviewed here.

4.1.3.1 Literature based on the personal and professional insights of authors

The literature discussed under this section is categorised into two important themes: the context specific language teaching and the atmosphere for learning the language.

i. Context specific language teaching

Prabhu (1990) points out that a good language teacher looks for the best method to teach English. For Prabhu, the best method is the one the teacher finds in his/her teaching contexts; the teacher needs to try different approaches and decide which

method can work out better for him/her, the students and the context. Shaikh (2013) too holds the same view of Prabhu that an effective language teaching method can be determined only by trying many language teaching approaches with students. Prabhu's (ibid.) findings are further developed by Freeman and Johnson (1998) who reconceptualised the knowledge-base of language teacher education as being based on the activity of teaching itself, the teacher who does it, the context in which it is done and the pedagogy by which it is done. Therefore an effective language teacher is expected to take into account the context in which he/she teaches. This falls in line with the study of Borg (ibid.) and Lee (ibid.) who argue that the distinctive nature of language teaching should be investigated and understood in relation to a specific social context rather than globally.

The insights of Gonzalez and Darling-Hammond (2000) into teacher preparation programmes for teachers to work effectively with language learning students are worth considering. They say that an effective language teacher should make the lesson learner-centred by placing the emphasis on the what, why and who of the lesson rather than the instructional methods of the lesson. Moreover effective teachers should have 'a clear understanding of themselves and their students as cultural beings' (p. 1). This again highlights the need for teachers to be aware of their teaching context (including the students' cultural backgrounds) and their own backgrounds to make their teaching culturally relevant and effective. This is supported by hooks (1997) when she said that educators need to be aware of the multicultural world in order to teach their students what they desire and deserve (see also Nieto 2003).

ii. Learning atmosphere

Successful student learning depends on the atmosphere in which the learning takes place. The teacher plays an important role in creating an atmosphere conducive for learning. Building a good relationship with students and colleagues can be considered as one of the important ways to create a suitable learning atmosphere. However, developing a good rapport with students and colleagues, according to Prabhu (ibid.), more depends on the personal characteristics of teachers than acquired teaching skills. Thompson (2008) says that apart from good teaching

skills, personal traits are equally important for teachers as they play a vital role in building and maintaining good rapport which in turn will lead students to successful learning. Kumaravadivelu (1992) affirms that a positive, learnable and teachable classroom atmosphere can be created by teachers who are purposeful, task-oriented, relaxed, warm, supportive and have a sense of humour. He recommended five macro strategies to be introduced to pre- and in-service teacher education programmes in order for second language teachers to be prepared with characteristics suitable for facilitating effective learning. These strategies are explored to illuminate what they mean in practice:

1) *Creating learning opportunities in class*

Here teaching is seen as an activity to create learning opportunities and learning is seen as an activity to utilize those opportunities. Opportunities for learning are created in a process of interactions between the teacher and students. Hence opportunities can be created not only by teachers but also by learners. For example, when a learner asks for the meaning of a new concept, the teacher, without giving the answer, begins an interaction with students by asking questions. The students express different ideas and the teacher develops the interaction until one of them comes out with the correct answer.

2) *Utilising learning opportunities created by the learner*

Teachers and learners are active participants in a classroom and the lesson is considered to be a joint venture to be accomplished. The teacher is one of the participants, of course with greater competence and authority. However, as a participant he or she cannot ignore the contribution of their partners i.e., the students. For example, a teacher asks for the meaning of 'deserts' and one of the students comes up with the word 'fruit'. The teacher immediately writes the word 'desserts' on the board and then comes back to the word 'deserts' to get the correct answer from the students. After the students give the answer the teacher discusses the word 'desserts' even though it is not relevant to the lesson.

3) *Facilitating negotiated interaction between participants*

'The term negotiated interaction denotes the learner's active involvement in clarification, confirmation, comprehension checks, requests, repairing, reacting and turn-taking' (p. 43). The learner is given freedom and encouragement to initiate meaningful interaction in the classroom. For example a teacher wants to get the meaning for the word 'divorce' which is in the textbook. The teacher instead of getting the meaning through

students' memory of the previous lessons, he or she questions them to elicit their own opinion on divorce and explains the meaning of it.

4) *Activating the intuitive heuristics of the learner*

Heuristics means a process in which learners are enabled to discover or learn something for themselves. Hence this strategy means that teachers need to provide a rich linguistic environment in the classroom so that the learner can infer certain underlying grammatical rules. The 'self-discovery rather than explicit presentation of underlying structural patterns' (p. 45) effectively affects learners' comprehension of language usage. For example a teacher who teaches advanced level grammar focuses on complex sentences with cause/effect relationships. With the help of a cartoon and providing the second part of the complex sentence in future tense, she asks the students to provide the first part of the sentence with words such as if, when and unless. The learners themselves discover that the first part of the sentence is always in the present tense.

5) *Contextualising linguistic input*

This strategy means that linguistic items such as words, grammar and sentences 'should be [...] practiced in meaningful contexts rather than taught as isolated, disconnected elements' (p. 46). Students need to be given opportunities in the classroom to practice what they learn in order to make them understand the meaning of what they learn. For example the teacher is expected to create contexts that encourage communication in the classroom through role-play, games and problem solving tasks.

According to Kumaravadivelu (ibid.), an effective language teacher would use the aforementioned five strategies in order to make his/her teaching effective. An effective teacher not only utilises the learning opportunities created by the learner (ibid.), but also as Rubin (1975) suggests learns from the good language learner. Good language learners use many strategies to learn the second language. Teachers who aspire to be effective in teaching have to help their less successful students to improve their performance by paying more attention to learner strategies already seen as productive (Rubin, ibid.).

4.1.3.2 Research literature on the characteristics of effective language teachers

This section is divided into two. Section a) reports the findings of research studies on the effective characteristics of language teachers under different themes and discusses what all the effective characteristics imply in the Sri Lankan context and what would need to be in place to encourage these characteristics to flourish. Section b) examines the connection among these studies and presents some insights into the trend of teachers and students on their perceptions of effective language teachers.

a) Characteristics of effective language teachers

The characteristics of effective language teachers are presented here under five main themes which are identified from the literature reviewed here. The themes are English language proficiency, pedagogical knowledge, lesson preparation and presentation, teaching in the first language of the students and socio-affective qualities of the teachers. Each theme also discusses what all the reviewed characteristics of effective language teaching imply in the Sri Lankan contexts and what would need to be in place to promote those characteristics.

English language proficiency

The studies by Brosh (1996), Park and Lee (2006), Shishavan and Sadeghi (2009), Werbinska (2009) and Arikan (2010) primarily highlight the English language proficiency of the teachers as one of the major characteristics of effective language teachers. Brosh (1996) investigated the characteristics of effective language teachers as perceived by teachers and students in the Israeli educational system. The study was conducted with a questionnaire and interview consisting of twenty items of teacher characteristics. The subjects of his research consisted of 200 foreign language teachers of English, French, Arabic and Hebrew and 406 high school students. Both students and teachers in his study reported that effective language teachers should have linguistic command in the target language.

Park and Lee (2006) conducted research among 169 teachers and 339 students in high schools in Korea to investigate their perceptions on the characteristics of

effective English teachers through a self-report questionnaire under three categories: English proficiency, pedagogical knowledge and socio-affective skills. The teachers ranked English proficiency as the most important effective characteristic while students ranked pedagogical knowledge the highest. However, one of the student sub-groups, i.e., the high achieving students perceived effective teachers as being proficient in their speaking. According to Park and Lee, their study (ibid) had implications for knowledge-based teacher education for teachers of English in Korea. The teachers' endorsement of English proficiency over pedagogical and socio-affective skills recommended that teacher education programmes should focus on improving teachers' English proficiency.

Shishavan and Sadeghi (2009) conducted research among fifty-nine English language teachers and 215 learners of English at universities, high schools and language institutions in Iran. The qualitative analysis of their work revealed that the mastery of the target language was perceived by teachers as essential for effective English language teaching, whereas students gave more importance to teachers' personality and the way they behaved towards their students. The student participants in the study by Chin and Lin (2009) also considered teachers' command in English as an important characteristic of their effective teaching.

Arikan (2010) maintains that effective teachers should have the subject-matter knowledge i.e., knowledge of the target language to prepare appropriate lesson plans besides using adequate resources for content delivery. Demiroz1 and Yesilyurt (2015) who conducted a survey among 212 prospective English teachers in Turkey found that effective teachers should teach the language communicatively i.e., the study revealed the importance of the English language proficiency to teach the same effectively.

English language proficiency of the teachers of English is an important concern in the Sri Lankan context. Studies (Fernando and Mallawa, 2003; Karunaratne, 2009; Wijeratna, 2002) reveal that the language proficiency of the teachers of English needs to be improved so that the students may experience more effective learning of English as a second language. Karunaratne's (2008) work also revealed that teachers of English in Sri Lanka heavily rely on the textbook in order to conceal their lack of English communicative competence.

These findings imply that effective teaching of English in the Sri Lankan context greatly depends on the improvement of English language proficiency of the teachers. The language proficiency particularly the communicative aspect remains a constant challenge to the teachers in Sri Lanka as they have minimal language exposure to develop their communicative competence. Besides, English as a second language curriculum in Sri Lanka does not teach the speaking and listening skills to students. This is because students are examined on their reading and writing skills only. This not only affects the English communicative competence of the students, but also that of the teachers as they do not have many opportunities to practice their English communicative skills with their students in the classroom. The researcher's experience of working in Sri Lankan schools suggests that prospective teachers of English are more likely to choose becoming an English teacher as an alternative or last resort, because the core subject in the advanced level (A/L) education is mathematics or science or commerce or any subject in the arts stream. In all the A/L streams English is taught only as an optional subject. Students following English language and literature as the core subject in the A/L Arts stream are very rare in the Sri Lankan educational contexts most probably because of the lack of qualified English teachers. Hence it can be understood that the subject matter (English proficiency) of the prospective teachers of English would be lower than the subject matter of the prospective teachers of other subjects. It is likely that most of the prospective teachers of English need to acquire necessary English proficiency during the English teacher education programmes. This situation also implies the need of a specific English stream in the A/L which can be used to motivate the students to study English and at the same time encourage prospective Sri Lankan teachers to target English teaching as their primary subject to specialise in. Further it seems likely that such specialisation could facilitate the students to have more English proficiency and consequently more effective English language teaching.

Pedagogical knowledge of teachers

The pedagogical knowledge of language teachers is another important characteristic highlighted by a few studies. Lesson preparation and presentation (the theme of the next section) are closely connected to pedagogy and hence it

needs to be clear what pedagogical knowledge of teachers means here. In general pedagogical knowledge means the knowledge of the instructional methods of a subject matter (Cochran, 1997). This knowledge of the instructional methods can be understood as ‘the specialised knowledge of teachers for creating effective teaching and learning environments for all students’ (Guerriero, 2012: 2).

Therefore the pedagogical knowledge of English language teachers is their knowledge about various language teaching approaches and methods.

Consequently lesson preparation and presentation can be considered as the ways in which these teachers put their pedagogical knowledge into practice (lesson preparation and presentation are discussed further below).

Park and Lee’s (2006) study reported students ranking pedagogical knowledge of language teachers the highest over their language proficiency level and socio-affective skills. The students’ endorsement of pedagogical knowledge over English proficiency and socio-affective skills implies that teachers should be conversant with second language acquisition theories, teaching methods and testing in order to help their students learn English effectively. The teacher participants in Shishavan and Sadeghi (2009) also reported that the pedagogical knowledge along with appropriate teaching techniques and methods is an important characteristic of effective language teachers.

Brown’s (2009) study identified and compared teachers’ and students’ perceptions of effective language teacher behaviours. Forty-nine foreign language teachers and their students from eighty-three classes across nine languages at the University of Arizona participated. The students participated in a questionnaire of twenty-four items covering several areas of foreign language pedagogy. The students favoured a grammar-based approach, whereas their teachers favoured more communicative language learning. The teachers believed strongly that grammar practice should be integrated with real-world contexts, however their students preferred learning the grammar which was the traditional approach in language learning whereby once students have learned the language structure, their speech will be grammatically correct (Ismail, 2010).

Brown's (2009) study is useful for the Sri Lankan context where the communicative teaching approach is still facing challenges (see section 3.3.3). One of the reasons for this identified by Perera (2001) was the lack of pedagogical knowledge about the communicative language teaching (CLT) among the teachers. Suntharesan (2012) in Jaffna found that in the Sri Lankan context CLT often clashes with the native cultural aspect, for example the traditional teacher dominant classrooms; CLT encourages more student-centred classrooms and conceives of the teacher more as a facilitator than an instructor. His study also found other demotivating factors such as the limited vocabulary of students, listening difficulties of students due to noisy classroom environments and infrequent use of technology in the classroom.

The literature reviewed under this section, *Pedagogical knowledge of teachers* implies that the effective teaching of English in Sri Lanka needs to consider the language teaching methods which have been implemented in the secondary schools. As discussed in Chapter Two (2.3.1.1 and 2.3.1.2), particularly two English language teaching methods - the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method and English as a life-skill programme - are related to the students and teachers in the secondary schools. Research (Perera, 2001; Karunaratne, 2008) shows that CLT in Sri Lankan classrooms is not successful as teachers of English are not well informed about this teaching approach. English as a life-skill programme too, as discussed in Chapter Two (2.3.1.2), is not successfully implemented in all the schools. As such, the effective teaching of English on the basis of the pedagogical knowledge of the teachers may be very challenging to the teachers unless the problems associated with these methods are properly addressed by the authorities concerned.

Lesson preparation and presentation

Almost all the literature reviewed in this chapter deals with this particular aspect as an important characteristic of effective language teachers. According to the literature reviewed here (e.g: Brosh, 1996; Shishavan and Sadeghi, 2009; Wichadee, 2010) lesson preparation means organizing or designing the lesson effectively and the presentation of the lesson means an efficient and interesting

delivery of the lesson so that learners may comprehend the lesson easily. In relation to the aspect of presentation of the lesson, many studies stress the importance of the effective communication of the teachers. According to Brosh (1996) for example, effective teachers teach the language comprehensibly through their ability to organise, explain and clarify. In his study, while teachers gave importance to items related to developing student motivation, the student participants highlighted the interesting delivery of lessons in the classroom. The teacher participants in Shishavan and Sadeghi (2009) also stressed the importance of effective presentation of the lesson by integrating group activities into the classroom. One of the sub-groups i.e., the male students in the study by Park and Lee (2006) expected their teachers to have a good sense of humour. Though it can be considered as a socio-affective quality of teachers, it can also be viewed as an important element in presenting the lesson interestingly.

Wichadee (2010) investigated the characteristics of effective English teachers as perceived by 400 students at Bangkok University. According to Wichadee, the students perceived effective English teachers as those who prepare their lessons well and have effective communication. She argued that students rated the category of organisation and communication skills the most important followed by socio-affective skills because,

- i) The students want their teachers to be more conversant with class preparation as this might help them understand things easily.
- ii) They hope to see their teachers use verbal or non-verbal behaviours to enable them to understand the content easily especially when English is used as a medium in the classroom (p. 9).

Wichadee (ibid.) developed the framework for her study from Park and Lee whose research (discussed above) investigated the characteristics of effective English teachers under three categories: English proficiency, pedagogical knowledge and socio-affective skills. However, Wichadee (2010) added one more category to Park and Lee's (2006), i.e. organisation and communication skills as this was highlighted in the work of Meepiarn and Koustsoulis (1995 and 2003 in Wichadee, ibid.). Koustsoulis (2003 in Wichadee, ibid.) investigated the effectiveness of teachers as perceived by students from twenty-five high schools

in Cyprus under three categories: human characteristics, communication skills and teaching and production characteristics. One of the most frequently reported characteristics was the ability to communicate effectively with students.

Barnes's (2010) study also primarily highlighted the importance of lesson delivery or presentation. His study employed a free writing instrument and asked 105 university students from a variety of subject majors to write, in their own language, about the attributes of effective lecturers of English as a foreign language. He analysed forty attributes of effective English as a foreign language lecturer and categorised them under five attribute categories as used by Faranda and Clarke (2004 in Barnes and Lock, 2013): rapport, delivery, fairness, knowledge and credibility and organisation and preparation. A comparison of the number of times the attributes from each category were identified reveals that the first two attribute categories, i.e. rapport and delivery dominated the responses. The other three categories received relatively little importance. However, according to the author, it does not mean that these less frequently discussed attribute categories are unimportant because the respondents may have felt that justification of the importance was self-evident or that well prepared lecturers could be taken for granted. Consequently, he stated that this was a limitation of the data presented in his study.

Chen (2012) by means of open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews collected data on favourable and unfavourable characteristics of English as a foreign language teacher from sixty Thai university students. Teachers' personal trait-related characteristics and classroom teaching-related characteristics emerged from the data. The latter included the characteristics related to the organization of the lesson, effective presentation of the lesson and also creation of a suitable atmosphere for learning as follows:

<i>Lesson delivery</i>	ways of presentation, ability to make things comprehensible and to deal with teaching content, assignment and error correction
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<i>Classroom activity organisation</i>	good activities to motivate students
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Classroom atmosphere creation

students like an entertaining, comfortable, relaxing and pleasant atmosphere (cf. pp. 215-18).

The entertaining atmosphere of the classroom in Chen (2012) as an effective aspect of presenting the lesson was similar to the idea of teachers' good sense of humour which was considered as their socio-affective quality in Park and Lee (2006) and Ghasemi and Hashemi (2011).

Besides the literature on the pedagogical knowledge of English language teachers (the previous theme), many studies (as reviewed above in this section) deal with the aspect of lesson preparation and presentation i.e., putting the pedagogical knowledge into practice. This implies that it is very important for teachers to put into practice through efficient lesson preparation and presentation the pedagogical knowledge they acquire in various teacher education and continuous professional development programmes.

In the Sri Lankan context, more concern is raised by the educational authorities at various levels regarding the issues related to lesson preparation and the delivery of the lesson because they try to implement certain issues such as notes of the lesson, record of work and the 5E method (see ii. of 2.2.2.3) in order to regulate the lesson preparation and delivery. However as discussed in Chapter Three (see sections 3.1 and 3.2) many problems such as the lack of differentiated learning materials to cater for students with varied learning abilities (Perera et al., 2010), lack of qualified teachers (Balasooriya, 2013), lack of learning resources, and overcrowded classrooms (Hettiarachchi, 2010) present Sri Lankan teachers with great challenges in their preparation and delivery of the lesson in the classroom. Hence, it implies that how various problems affect the lesson preparation and its delivery needs to be more emphasized than how teachers can prepare and deliver the lesson. Since the current study investigates how the teaching efficacy of the teachers of English is affected by various classroom and other problems, dealing with problems affecting the lesson preparation and its delivery is likely to elicit new insight into the effective teaching of English, as well as suggest strategies for

addressing the difficulties encountered and which will lead to more efficient preparation and delivery of lessons.

Teaching in the first language (L1) of the students

In a few studies teachers and students perceived teaching or learning English in the L1 of the students as a characteristic of effective language teachers. Although this theme can be included in the theme of lesson presentation, since the literature give specific consideration to this aspect it is dealt with separately. Both the teacher and student participants in Brosh (1996) did not endorse items related to positive attitudes towards native speakers and teaching in the target language. The students in Chen and Lin (2009) did not favour teachers conducting lessons in English because according to the authors, most of the junior high school students had not yet acquired a large English vocabulary to follow the instruction of teachers given in English.

In Shishavan and Sadeghi (2009) students agreed more than teachers that teaching English in L1 of the learners (Persian) was one of the important characteristics of effective language teachers. The three classroom teaching-related characteristics by Chen (2012) (mentioned above) also included a fourth characteristic i.e. *language used in teaching* which can be added to this theme. The students in Chen (2012) liked to learn English with teachers who can speak both the first language (L1) and the target language.

According to the English teaching experience of the researcher the use of L1 (Tamil or Sinhala) in the teaching of English is a very common feature in Sri Lanka. As Karunaratne (2008) says, besides over depending on the textbooks the teachers of English in Sri Lanka use much of their L1 during the English lessons in order to conceal their lack of English communicative competence. However, the researcher would argue from his English teaching experiences in Sri Lanka that teachers are in a way forced to use their L1 most of the time during the lesson as the English literary level of the students was too low to understand teachers' instructions and explanation in English. A reasonable use of L1 is recommended in teaching English through the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach (Richards, 2001). Karunaratne (2008) says, that although teachers are

instructed by the educational authorities to use CLT in the English lessons, the instruction to teachers on the use of L1 along with English is not sufficient. Hence, promoting effective teaching of English in Sri Lanka implies, besides developing teachers' English language proficiency, the need to provide sufficient instruction on the reasonable use of L1 in the English lesson. Further, it also implies instructing the students on reasonable dependency on their L1 while using the target language more to learn the latter.

Socio-affective qualities of teachers

A number of studies highlight some socio-affective qualities of the teachers as an important characteristic of their effective language teaching. The socio-affective qualities primarily include the personality of the teachers as to how they need to relate to and treat the students and expose certain personal trait-related characteristics when dealing with students. In Brosh (1996) the student participants valued the items related to fair treatment of students as a characteristic of effective language teachers. The work of Phern and Abidin (2012) among Malaysian students learning English also revealed that effective language teachers avoid student favouritism. Certain sub-groups of student participants in Park and Lee (2006) also reported the following socio-affective qualities: the high achieving students perceived effective teachers as being helpful to students in and outside the classroom and the female students reported a fair treatment of students as an aspect of effective teacher quality. A similar finding was revealed in Ghasemi and Hashemi (2011) who conducted a survey on effective characteristics of English teachers among 200 college students in Iran. In their study more female than male students reported fair treatment of students as an important teacher characteristic.

Chen and Lin (2009) conducted research via a questionnaire with 198 junior high school students in Taiwan to explore their general perceptions about effective English teacher characteristics. Through this study the researchers wanted to know whether the students' gender difference and differences in academic achievement influenced their perception of teacher characteristics differently. The questionnaire consisted of fifty items classified into instructional competence,

personality and teacher-student relationship. According to their findings the personality of teachers and teacher-student relationship, being enthusiastic in teaching, friendly, open-minded and respecting and caring about students were perceived by students as more important characteristics than the instructional competence of teachers. Moreover students with high academic achievement considered teacher-student relationship more important than students with low academic performance. The female students perceived English teachers' personality and teacher-student relationship as more important than male students did. The male students in the study favoured respecting students and being ethical as more important characteristics for effective teachers. Koc's (2013) study which was conducted among 365 Turkish students to know their perceptions on good English language teachers too revealed a similar finding. They expected good English teachers to establish good relations with them. Further, Chen and Lin's (2009) findings were supported by Celik, Arikan and Caner (2013) whose study was conducted among 998 Turkish undergraduate students. They reported that teachers' socio-affective quality should be being friendly and loving individuals rather than authoritative figures.

In Shishavan and Sadeghi (2009) the teachers perceived their personality as essential for effective English language teaching, whereas students gave more importance to the way they behaved towards students. In Wichadee (2010) the student participants believed that a teacher's pleasant personality such as not being bad-tempered, being fair, or being friendly can help create a good learning atmosphere. The most frequently reported socio-affective characteristic of effective language teachers in Koutsoulis (2003 in Wichadee, *ibid.*) was teachers' ability to manage teacher-student relations. As mentioned above besides the classroom teaching-related characteristics, the study of Chen (2012) presented some personal trait-related characteristics as socio-affective qualities of effective language teachers:

<i>Emotion</i>	sense of humour, temper, patience etc.
<i>Kindness</i>	teachers' friendliness and politeness to students
<i>Fairness</i>	teachers' equality and impartiality to students

<i>Lenience</i>	teachers should not be too strict but have some flexibility
<i>Responsibility</i>	it involves teaching intention and preparation

(cf. pp. 215-18).

The male students in Ghasemi and Hashemi (2011) also mentioned a sense of humour as an important teacher quality.

Among many socio-affective qualities of teachers, the personality of teachers is important and relevant to the Sri Lankan context as teachers need to take control of overcrowded classrooms in order for lessons to be conducted smoothly. The classrooms consist of students from different social backgrounds, and with different characteristics. They also differ in their level of motivation for learning. More motivated and well behaved students are likely to be affected by their counterparts. Hence maintaining discipline in the classroom is highly needed to conduct effective lessons. For this, the personality of the teacher plays an important role. Further lots of students who were affected by the effects of the civil war are found in the Sri Lankan context particularly in the context of Jaffna. The consequences of the war have left children with psychological problems and socio-economic disadvantages. Such children need hope and support to cope with such consequences and engage in daily educational activities. Hence teachers' personal trait-related characteristics such as supportive emotions, kindness and fairness as the studies reviewed above suggest are very much expected by students (and not just Sri Lankan students) for effective learning.

b) Some insights into the effective language teachers research studies reviewed

A careful study of the aforementioned research may help one to identify two main domains under which many items were included in the studies. One is teachers and the other is the content of what they are teaching. However, one may identify another important domain, i.e. how teachers teach or deliver the content they possess, but since the way of teaching is part of the very selves of teachers it can be included in the domain of teachers. Another connection found among these

literature are the similar perceptions of school and university students about the effective characteristics of their foreign language teachers as discussed below.

i. Teachers

The domain of teachers includes ‘what’ they have and ‘how’ they deliver it. In other words, the knowledge of the target language (proficiency of English) and the competence in teaching that language (pedagogical knowledge).

Proficiency of English

The research studies reviewed suggest that effective teachers should possess a good command of the target language. The participants of the research studies (e.g: Brosh, 1996; Park and Lee, 2006; Shishavan and Sadeghi, 2009) both teachers and students, place the mastery of the target language above all other effective characteristics. Sometimes though students consider the pedagogical knowledge of teachers as the most important characteristic they do not undermine teachers’ proficiency of English.

Pedagogical knowledge of teachers

Next to the proficiency of English, the participants of almost every research study reviewed considered the pedagogical knowledge of teachers as a very important characteristic of effective language teaching (e.g: Brosh, 1996; Park and Lee, 2006; Wichadee, 2010). The students expressed this quality in different ways such as preparing the lesson well, delivering the lesson interestingly, explaining the subject clearly and easily, and communicating with the students comprehensively.

Personality of teachers

Another important characteristic of effective language teaching which was identified in all the research studies is the personality of teachers (e.g: Kumaravadivelu, 1992; Chen and Lin, 2009; Shishavan and Sadeghi, 2009; Wichadee, 2010). It includes the aspects such as building up a good rapport with students, treating all the students equally, being helpful, kind, enthusiastic and humorous and other personal traits which can create a better learning atmosphere in and around the classroom.

ii. Content of teaching

Regarding the content of teaching the studies showed that the student participants generally preferred structural methods to communicative language teaching (CLT) (Brown, 2009; Ismail, 2010). CLT aims to create real world situations in the classroom in smaller group settings to enable students to express themselves in the target language. The teacher participants in Brown (ibid.), Brosh (1996), Park and Lee (ibid.) endorsed the CLT in small groups as a characteristic of effective language learning. It is notable that the students in these studies while preferring to learn English grammar, wanted their teacher to explain the subject more in the first language than the second language even though they opted for the English proficiency of teachers as the most important characteristic for effective language teaching.

iii. Perceptions of school and university students

The studies by Brosh (1996), Park and Lee (2006) and Chen and Lin (2009) were conducted among school students while the studies by Shishavan and Sadaghi (2009), Brown (2009), Wichadee (2010) Barnes (2010) and Chen (2012) were conducted among university students. Participants in both groups of studies had similar ideas on effective teaching or teachers such as competency in the target language, possession of good pedagogical knowledge, preference to follow the lesson in the first language of the students, preference to follow grammar-based lessons and teachers having socio-affective skills in teaching. However, the university students stressed more on the communication skills of the teachers than the school students. It can be interpreted that the university teaching which is more based on the lecture method contributed to the university students choosing this characteristic as an effective element of their teachers.

Having explored literature about effective language teaching in diverse teaching contexts, in the next section I examine Sri Lankan studies on the effective teaching of English.

4.1.4 Sri Lanka based literature on effective teaching of English

A few Sri Lankan-based studies highlight the need of effectiveness in English language teaching. These studies focus on specific elements of the effective teaching of English such as the use of computer technology in the lesson (Premawardhena, 2009; 2013), making the learning materials suitable to the levels of students through adaptation (Perera et al., 2010) and encouraging the learning strategies of students according to their personality-types (Liyanage, 2004). The following section reviews the available literature under relevant subheadings.

4.1.4.1 Computer aided learning

Premawardhena (ibid.) investigated the effectiveness of the computer aided language learning (CALL) among university students in Sri Lanka. He found that the effectiveness of English as a second language programmes in universities had to be upgraded as students left schools with very poor competence in English. Having conducted a series of pilot studies, Premawardhena claimed that his main study among fifty university students revealed significant evidence of improvement in their performance when lessons were integrated with computer aided language learning. He said that what cannot be achieved through mere textbook based language learning during a period of thirteen years in the school can be achieved within a short period through the use of modern technologies such as a computer, the internet and other multi-media resources. Further he argued that the students significantly advanced in speaking and listening, the language skills which are neglected in the school curriculum in Sri Lanka.

4.1.4.2 Material adaptation

A collaborative action research study conducted by Perera et al. (ibid.) in a selected Sri Lankan school showed that the effectiveness of the ELT particularly with heterogeneous students could be achieved through adapting the learning materials according to their different learning levels. They said that teacher education programmes in Sri Lanka give only a little attention on how to cater to the different ability levels of students. This problem is further aggravated as there is a mismatch between the teachers' instructional manuals and the textbooks given

to students. They also found that in a given unit of a textbook there were activities irrelevant to the competencies the students were expected to acquire in the particular unit. Hence their action research study offered the following suggestions for English teaching and learning to be effective and improved in Sri Lanka.

- In the future textbooks should be written to cater for students with different ability levels of learning.
- Teacher education programmes should give special training to teachers on adapting materials to suit the levels of their students.
- Regional English support centres should provide appropriate continuous professional development programmes to empower teachers.
- Mismatches between teachers' instructional manuals and students' textbooks should be removed.
- More action research should be encouraged in classroom levels to improve English teaching and learning (cf. pp. 74-75).

4.1.4.3 Encouraging students' natural learning strategies

Liyanage (2004) showed that effectiveness of English language learning in Sri Lankan classrooms could be enhanced by considering the choice and use of the second language learning strategies of students in terms of their personality-type, gender and ethno-religious affiliations. He also investigated how these affiliations (variables) influence the strategies preferred by students in five different contexts of learning English as a second language: listening in class, speaking in class, listening and speaking outside class, reading and writing. His study revealed a strong association between the variables and the students' individual metacognitive, cognitive and social affective strategies. It also revealed that students had varied learning strategies according to the different learning contexts. Liyanage said that in order for English language teaching (ELT) in Sri Lanka to be effective, pedagogical approaches should grow within the socio-cultural contexts of the learners. He also recommended that learning materials indigenous to the particular culture to which the students belong should be incorporated into the pedagogy. He concluded that the learning strategies that are naturally preferred and sought by students would maximise and benefit the process of target language learning.

Besides this Sri Lankan literature on effective teaching of English, two further studies which were already discussed in chapter three (3.3.3.) can be included in this review i.e., Karunaratne (2008) and Perera (2001). Their findings showed that ELT in Sri Lanka which is based on communicative language teaching remains more teacher-centered due to the lack of oral interaction between the teacher and students. They suggested that this could be remedied by using a variety of teaching materials which can promote teacher-student interaction in the classroom.

4.2 Teacher efficacy

This second part of the chapter reviews literature on teacher efficacy under five main sections. The first section presents the definitions of teacher efficacy as defined by different scholars or researchers. The second section explains how the concept of teacher efficacy evolved from different theories, how it came to be understood as teacher efficacy and teacher self-efficacy, then four sources of teacher efficacy and the notion of collective teacher efficacy are explored alongside the importance of teacher efficacy for student achievement. The literature on relationship between teacher efficacy and positive teacher outcomes are reviewed in section three. The current study deals with teachers' English teaching efficacy which is closely connected to student motivation and achievement. Hence, section four reviews literature on the relationship of teacher efficacy with student motivation and achievement. The final section reviews literature to show the connection between teacher efficacy and teacher effectiveness. An understanding of teacher effectiveness in addition to teacher efficacy is salient as the educational authorities in Sri Lanka focus on teacher effectiveness when criticising teacher performance, and teacher efficacy is a lesser known term in Sri Lanka as studies on teacher efficacy are rarely conducted in Sri Lankan educational contexts. The final section ends with a note on the connection between teacher efficacy and the current study.

4.2.1 Definitions of teacher efficacy

The belief(s) teachers are considered to have about their own teaching effectiveness is known as teacher efficacy. It includes teachers' instructional decisions that could shape students' educational experiences and consequently affect their academic performance (Romi and Leyser, 2006). Hence, as already mentioned in Chapter One, teacher efficacy has been described as "teachers' beliefs in their abilities to affect student performance" (Dellinger et al., 2008: 753; Cf. Berman, et al., 1977; Dembo and Gibson, 1985). The conceptualisation of teacher efficacy is understood in relation to teachers' role

in educating students and hence the study of teacher efficacy generally focuses on the classroom in which teachers engage in education and teaching, “teachers’ perception of [their] own competence, and on the ability of teaching as a professional discipline to shape students’ knowledge, values and morality” (Friedman and Kass, 2002: 3).

Teachers’ own judgments of their abilities to enhance students’ learning and achievements can play a very important role in determining not only a student’s performance in the classroom but also their characters (Cheung, 2006; Woolfolk-Hoy and Spero, 2005). Hence teacher efficacy is defined as a teacher’s “judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of students’ engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated” (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001: 783; Cf. Guskey and Passaro, 1994).

4.2.2 Theoretical perspectives

The construct of teacher efficacy is the result of two different theoretical perspectives, Rotter’s (1966) locus of control theory and Bandura’s (1977) social cognitive theory. According to Rotter (1966) locus of control refers to the extent a person believes that the perceived cause(s) of an intended outcome are within his/her control. “Social cognitive theory is concerned with human agency, or the ways that people exercise some level of control over their own lives” (Goddard, Hoy and Hoy, 2000: 480). The following sections present how understandings of teacher efficacy developed from these two different theories.

4.2.2.1 The first conceptual strand

Based on Rotter’s social learning theory, studies on efficacy were first conducted by the Rand Corporation. The Rand researchers were inspired by the following thoughts of Rotter’s (1966) article entitled “Generalised expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement”:

Teachers who concur that the influence of the environment overwhelms a teacher’s ability to have an impact on a student’s learning exhibit a belief that reinforcement of their teaching efforts lies outside their control or is external to them. Teachers who express

confidence in their ability to teach difficult or unmotivated students evidence a belief that reinforcement of teaching activities lies within the teacher's control or is internal (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998: 3).

In 1976 the Rand researchers, based on Rotter's thoughts, included two efficacy items (mentioned in italics below) in their questionnaire to examine the success of various reading programmes and interventions among minority students (Armor et al., 1976).

Rand item 1: *"When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can't do much because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment"*.

A teacher who agrees with this statement indicates that environmental factors overwhelm all the attempts and hard work he or she exerts in schools.

Environmental factors include realities in a student's home or in the community, conflicts and violence in the society, socio-economic realities related to class, race and gender of the student, their emotional and cognitive needs and value given to education at home and so on. All these factors have their impact on students' motivation and performance in the school (Tschannen-Moran et al., *ibid*).

Rand item 2: *"If I really try hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students"*.

A teacher who agrees with this statement indicates confidence in his or her ability as a teacher to overcome factors that could make student learning difficult. The teachers who have confidence in their abilities as teachers show that they have adequate training and developed strategies to overcome the obstacles in educating their students (*ibid*).

The Rand researchers combined the score of those two statements "to determine one overall efficacy score" (Fives, 2003: 5) and called the level of teachers' agreement with these two statements as teacher efficacy, "a construct that purported to reveal the extent to which a teacher believed that the consequences of teaching – student motivation and learning – were in the hands of the teacher, that is, internally controlled" (Tschannen-Moran et al., *ibid*: 4). According to Tschannen-Moran et al. (*ibid*).

"It may have been simply a hunch or a whim, but they got results, powerful results, and the concept of teacher efficacy was born" (p. 2).

4.2.2.2 A second conceptual strand

As explained above, while the first strand of efficacy research was based on Rotter's theories, a second strand emerged out of "Bandura's social cognitive theory and his construct of self-efficacy" (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998: 6). Researchers (e.g. Zee and Koomen, 2016; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001; Ashton and Webb, 1986; Gibson and Dembo, 1984) generally credit the Stanford professor Albert Bandura (1977; 1986) for providing the theoretical framework for understanding the efficacy of teachers. Bandura (1977), in his seminal work "Self-Efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioural Change" defined self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3). Dibapile (2012) says,

The importance of belief in self-efficacy is that it acts as a mediator between knowledge and behaviours while connecting to environmental situations. Self-efficacy provides useful information for teachers with knowledge and skills; if they have a high teacher efficacy they can have an impact on the behaviours of students as well as overcome environmental challenges (p. 83).

Teacher self-efficacy

According to Goddard, Hoy and Hoy (2000), Bandura (1977) identified teacher efficacy as a type of self-efficacy – "the outcome of a cognitive process in which people construct beliefs about their capacity to perform at a given level of competence" (p. 481). These beliefs affect how much effort individuals make, how long they can withstand the challenges they face, their resilience in times of failures and the stress they undergo in coping with demanding situations (ibid.). Hoy (2000) defines teacher self-efficacy as teachers' confidence in the ability to promote student learning. Teacher self-efficacy is vital not only for student success but also for the success of the teacher. According to Hoy, Hoy, and Davis (2009 in Vadahi and Lesha, 2015: 83), "greater efficacy leads to greater effort and persistence, which leads to better performance, which in turn leads to greater efficacy".

4.2.2.3 Conceptual confusion of teacher efficacy

According to Goddard, Hoy and Hoy (2000) there is some confusion about the nature of teacher efficacy as it has been effected from two separate conceptual strands. They say that some have assumed that Rotter's internal locus of control and Bandura's perceived self-efficacy are more or less the same. In explaining the difference between the two concepts Bandura (1977) pointed out that beliefs about one's capability to produce certain actions (perceived self-efficacy) are not the same as beliefs about whether actions affect outcomes (locus of control). Locus of control and perceived self-efficacy have no empirical relationship with each other. Rotter's internal and external locus of control is not related to personal efficacy but primarily concerned with causal beliefs about the relationship between actions and outcomes.

4.2.2.4 Two classes of expectations

According to Bandura (1977) there are two classes of expectations that can influence human behaviour: an efficacy expectation, the "conviction that one can successfully execute the behaviour required to produce the outcome" and an outcome expectation, "a person's estimate that a given behaviour will lead to certain outcomes" (p. 193).

The former is the conviction that one has the ability, knowledge, and skills to successfully execute the behaviour or actions required to produce the desired outcome(s). The latter represents a person's estimate of the likely consequences (impact) of performing a task at the self-expected level of performance. That is, outcome expectancy is the belief that a given behaviour or action will indeed lead to expected outcome(s) (Gavora, 2010: 2).

Coladarci (1992), Enochs, Smith and Huinker (2000) and Woodcock (2011) explain the aforementioned two classes of expectations within the context of teaching. For example, an outcome expectation is illustrated by the teacher who believes that skilful instruction can overcome external influences (issues of family and environment) on the student. "Here, efficacy is expressed not for oneself but, rather for an abstract collective of teachers" (Coladarci, *ibid*: 324). "An efficacy expectation, in contrast, would be reflected by the teacher's confidence that he or

she personally is capable of such [skilful] instruction” (ibid.). Hoy and Woolfolk (1990) named these two classes of expectation as "general teaching efficacy" and "personal teaching efficacy" (also Cf. Woodcock, 2011). Coladarci (ibid.) simplified this distinction to "general efficacy" and "personal efficacy". Bandura (1977; also Cf. Bandura, 2006 and Woodcock, 2011) argued that a teacher who possesses a high level of personal efficacy may have lower general efficacy. It is because of his or her belief that the home and environmental factors external to the teacher’s control have a greater impact on student learning than the teacher. In contrast, a new teacher may believe that teachers, in general, can teach their students effectively, but the teacher him/herself lacks the skills to teach the lesson effectively.

Gavora (ibid.) says that if a teacher is going to be successful, he or she should possess both high efficacy expectation and high outcome expectation. Importantly, if the teacher possesses the former and lacks the latter, it is unlikely that the teacher will be successful even if he or she is professionally qualified.

4.2.2.5 Four sources of efficacy

According to Bandura (1997; also see Gavora, 2010) there are four sources which can facilitate the development of high teacher self-efficacy: i) mastery experiences, ii) vicarious experiences, iii) social persuasion and iv) psychological and emotional states.

i) Mastery experiences

Mastery experiences are the most powerful source of efficacy information. “These experiences are situations in which teachers demonstrate their own teaching success, thus proving that they are competent teachers” (Gavora, ibid: 2).

However, Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) say that not all successful experiences encourage efficacy. For example when success is gained “through extensive external assistance, relatively late in learning, or on an easy and

unimportant task” efficacy is not enhanced (p. 19). Goddard, Hoy and Hoy (2000) support this contention as they say that when success is frequent or too easy, failure may produce discouragement. Gavora (ibid) observes that when things go wrong in teaching this can lead to teachers experiencing low self-efficacy:

Whenever teachers engage in teaching activities, they interpret their results and use these interpretations to develop beliefs about their ability to engage in similar activities. If these activities are consistently successful, they tend to raise self-efficacy or, conversely, if these activities typically produce failure, self-efficacy is likely to be lowered. Therefore, if a teacher initially has a low sense of efficacy, it will bring doubt about his/her abilities. Such doubt likely will result in failure in teaching, and also reinforce low self-efficacy (ibid: 3).

ii) Vicarious experiences

Vicarious experience is viewed as learning from observing the successes of other teachers. Gavora (ibid.) says that when teachers observe and model their success their colleagues may learn from their successes which in turn will enhance their positive self-efficacy. In the same manner, observing the failures of other teachers despite the individual teacher making a strong effort may affect efficacy beliefs negatively and lead the teacher to the conclusion that teaching is difficult and unmanageable (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Huber (1996) connects vicarious experiences with individual and collective teacher efficacy (see also section 4.2.2.7). Just as vicarious experiences enhance personal teacher efficacy, they also promote collective teacher efficacy because “organizations learn by observing other organizations” (Goddard, Hoy and Hoy, ibid: 484).

iii) Social persuasion

Coaching and encouraging feed-back given by colleagues or superiors may influence teacher self-efficacy positively (Gavora, ibid.). Formal teacher development programmes such as course work and professional development workshops provide teachers with information about their teaching career, strategies and methods for teachers to enhance their skills. However, such

skills may not enhance teachers' efficacy until they successfully use those skills to enhance students' learning (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998; Goddard, Hoy and Hoy, *ibid.*). Goddard, Hoy and Hoy (*ibid.*) contend that verbal persuasion alone is not sufficient but teachers have to encounter "models of success and positive direct experience" (p. 484) to promote their collective teacher efficacy. Emotional support also enhances teachers' self-efficacy (Gavora, *ibid.*).

iv) Psychological and emotional states

Gavora says that teachers' self-efficacy judgements are influenced by their psychological and emotional states. While teachers' excitement and enthusiasm can indicate success in teaching stress, anxiety and other negative emotional states may lead teachers to negatively judge their own teaching abilities and skills.

Hoy (2000) views the school setting itself, particularly the situations which help to make novice teachers feel settled in their school, "as having a potentially powerful impact on a teacher's sense of efficacy" (p. 43). For example, offering help to new teachers can be an important way as this may help them not to experience a series of failures which in turn affect mastery experiences, one of the prime sources of a sense of efficacy (Hoy, *ibid.*).

Henson (2001) says that self-efficacy beliefs are considered as the major mediators for our behaviour, and particularly, behavioural change. Other works of Bandura continued to develop for over two decades (cf. Bandura, 1982, 1986, 1993, 1996) and his works "defend the idea that our beliefs in our abilities powerfully affect our behaviour, motivation, and ultimately our success or failure" (Henson, 2001: 3).

Bandura (1997 as cited in Henson, 2001: 3) "proposed that because self-efficacy beliefs were explicitly self-referent in nature and directed toward perceived abilities given specific tasks, they were powerful predictors of behaviour".

4.2.2.6 Implication of sources of efficacy in Jaffna context

Since the current study investigates how the teaching efficacy of English teachers is affected by various problems and challenges, it is appropriate to consider the sources which promote or are likely to promote the efficacy of the teachers of English in the context of Jaffna in Sri Lanka.

Regarding mastery experiences, unlike the teachers in high-performing schools, the teachers in low-performing schools may rarely have successful teaching experiences as their students generally have lower levels of English (see discussion in 7.3 of Chapter Seven). Recurrent experiences of the researcher as a teacher of English with his colleagues in rural schools suggest that their students' poor performance made them feel discouraged and frustrated.

Vicarious experiences are more likely to be associated with the teachers in high-performing schools than those in low-performing schools. This is because, according to the extensive teaching experience of the researcher in the context of Jaffna, the former have opportunities to teach with experienced colleagues, but the latter do not have such opportunities in their small and rural schools. In some cases, the teachers in low-performing schools are likely to be deprived of vicarious experiences totally as they are teaching English as sole teachers in their schools (the experiences of teachers in low-performing schools who are the sole teacher of English in their school is discussed further in Chapter Seven).

The continuous professional development programmes, seminars and workshop conducted regularly by the Department of Education in Sri Lanka as social persuasion are more or less equally available to the teachers both in low and high-performing schools (see discussion in 7.4 of Chapter Seven). However the teachers in high-performing schools are likely to enjoy more social persuasion than their counterparts as the former tend to teach with senior colleagues who might give feedback and encouragement to their junior teachers (see discussion in 7.4 of Chapter Seven).

As discussed in Chapter Two (2.1.3) teachers in Sri Lanka, particularly the teachers in the North and East of Sri Lanka, were directly exposed to the civil war and its consequences such as internal displacements, social insecurity, low income, destruction of cultural values among students and many others. These can negatively contribute to the psychological and emotional states of teachers which is one of the sources of teachers' efficacy.

The above mentioned problems and challenges associated with the sources of teacher efficacy in the schools in Jaffna imply that the current study needs to explore to what extent an absence of sources of efficacy contributes to a lack of teaching efficacy amongst teachers of English.

4.2.2.7 Collective teacher efficacy

Collective teacher efficacy relates to the perception a group of teachers have about their ability to affect the academic performance of their students (Ramos et al., 2014). Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy (2000) define this as the perceptions of teachers in a school that their efforts as a whole will positively affect student learning. According to these researchers teachers' shared beliefs shape the normative environment of the school they teach in and become an important aspect of the culture of the school.

Based on the social cognitive theory of Bandura (1997), collective teacher efficacy is related "to the way people exert some control over their own lives, or to the beliefs in their own capacities to produce certain action" (Ramos et al., *ibid*: 179). "Therefore, the collective efficacy refers to the exercise of the action in the ambit of the group, being comprehended as the shared beliefs by the body of teachers to produce effects over determined actions" (*ibid.*, Cf: Bandura, 1997). Five and Looney (2009) contend that like a personal sense of efficacy collective efficacy beliefs for groups can have effect on their "goal setting, motivation, effort and persistence with challenging tasks or situations" (p. 183).

4.2.2.8 Collective efficacy as a property of schools

Bandura (1993; 1997 in Goddard et al., 2000) views collective teacher efficacy as an important school property. This is because of the relationship between teacher efficacy and student performance as Goddard et al. contend,

Just as individual teacher efficacy may partially explain the effect of teachers on student achievement, from an organizational perspective, collective teacher efficacy may help to explain the differential effect that schools have on student achievement (p. 483).

Hence, collective teacher efficacy has the potential to explain how schools differ in achieving their objective i.e., student learning (ibid.). Therefore in the current study it will be important to ascertain whether teachers in high and low-performing schools have different perceptions of their teaching efficacy, and if such perceptions as Goddard et al (ibid) contend are illustrative of the ways in which schools in Jaffna differ in their approach in achieving student learning/success in acquiring English.

The literature reviewed on collective teacher efficacy generated themes such as teachers' attitude of togetherness in achieving their goals, importance of the collective teacher efficacy to foster parent-teacher relationships and the relationship between collective teacher efficacy and the academic press of the school. These themes are outlined below.

i) Attitude of togetherness

Protheroe (2008) contends that teachers in a school who are characterised by a "together we can do" attitude are more likely to face challenges and are less likely to give up. However, it is argued that teachers with a low level of collective efficacy are reluctant to accept responsibility for their student failures, but instead are ready to blame students' socio-economic state and their lack of knowledge as the causes for their failure.

ii) Collective teacher efficacy and parent-teacher relationship

The study of Brinson and Steiner (2007) finds a positive impact of collective efficacy on parent-teacher relationships. According to these authors, the teachers who are confident in their abilities and effectiveness are more willing to welcome

parents' contribution in their children's academic performance. Brinson and Steiner also say that collective efficacy also tends to enhance teacher commitment to school as it encourages individual teachers to share with others what they know.

iii) Collective teacher efficacy and academic press of the school

The work of Hoy, Sweetland and Smith (2002) found a positive relationship between teachers' collective efficacy and the academic press, that is "the extent to which the school is driven by a quest for academic excellence" (ibid: 79) of the school. They said that when teachers' collective efficacy is strong the school has a strong focus on academic pursuits which not only help teachers persist but also to reinforce "a pattern of shared beliefs" (ibid: 89) held by the teachers. Hence collective teacher efficacy and the academic press of a school mutually enhance each other, which in turn promote student achievement.

The current study only investigated how the teaching efficacy of individual teachers is affected by various challenges. Though it is possible to trace the elements of collective efficacy of the teachers when their individual perceptions are carefully studied, it was not the primary objective of the current study. Collective teacher efficacy as a property of schools implies here that the current study which deals with two groups of schools, low and high-performing, give impetus to future researchers to delve into this issue.

4.2.3 Teacher efficacy and positive teacher outcomes

Teacher efficacy as teachers' belief in their capability to affect student learning, can be expected to influence teachers' decisions and actions related to teaching (Fives, 2003). Fives (ibid: 23) says, "the power of self-efficacy is rooted in its ability to guide the decisions that teachers make in the course of their role as teachers". Researchers (e.g. Ashton & Webb, 1986; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998; Fives, 2003; Richardson, 2011) found important relationships between teacher efficacy and positive teacher outcomes. To facilitate discussion the literature reviewed under this section has been divided into the following themes: setting high expectations for students and themselves (teachers), teacher

behaviours fostering student learning, teacher decisions in favour of student learning needs and responding to innovation and change.

4.2.3.1 Setting high expectations for students and themselves (teachers)

Literature reviewed under this section indicated that teachers with high efficacy set goals or expectations not only for students but for themselves too. Allinder (1995) examined the sense of personal and (general) teaching efficacy of nineteen special education teachers. His study revealed that teachers with high personal efficacy and high teaching efficacy increased end-of-year goals for their students. The study also found that the end-of-year goals set by the teachers with high teaching efficacy were ambitious for their students and high personal efficacy of teachers resulted in significant academic growth among students.

Setting goals or having high expectations is not only related to student teaching,

but also accounts for the mediational role that self-efficacy beliefs play in motivation and performance. This means that during student teaching, the act of setting goals in itself is insufficient to ensure that these goals will either be sought, or achieved (...) (Gibbs, 2002: 1).

Research (Bandura & Wood, 1989; Locke et al. 1984) suggests that when individuals' self-efficacy is stronger, they set higher goals and are firmer in their commitment to the goals they set. Locke and Latham (1990) contend that challenging goals increases teachers' motivation and success in their performance.

4.2.3.2 Teacher behaviours fostering student learning

Teacher efficacy is related to classroom behaviours of teachers, specifically instructional behaviours which can foster student academic achievement. Ashton et al. (1983) and Dembo & Gibson (1985) found that teachers with high self-efficacy were able to keep the children engaged with the classroom tasks and much concerned about the academic instruction they utilised in the classroom. The work of White (2009) also found that teachers with high efficacy provided their students with a wealth of instructional strategies which enhanced student achievement. According to White (ibid: 106) the teachers in his study viewed "success in the classroom as a dual responsibility" as they expected their students to contribute to their own success. Classroom management is very important for teachers to provide their students with a better learning environment (Mojavezi

and Tamiz, 2012). Tuckman and Sexton (1990) and Woolfolk et al. (1990) found in their studies that teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy solved classroom problems effectively and also proved their persistence when students failed in their subjects. Richardson (2011) interviewed and observed classroom lessons of twelve efficacious teachers to determine if their African American students performed better when their teachers were highly efficacious. He found an important teacher behaviour which fostered student learning i.e., efficacious teachers did not allow racial or ethnic stereotype or personal biases to overcome their classroom teaching.

4.2.3.3 Teacher decisions in favour of student learning needs

Teachers with high efficacy identify the learning needs of their students and act accordingly. Smylie (1989) found in his study that teachers with high self-efficacy were much more likely to provide a variety of models to their students to affect their learning for example making the learners work individually or in pairs or groups. Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2001) also found that teachers with high self-efficacy were likely to divide the class into small groups instead of teaching them as a whole and thereby fulfil the learning needs of their students i.e., the need of being given more individual attention by their teachers.

4.2.3.4 Responding to innovation and change.

Stein and Wang (1988) investigated the relationship between implementing innovative programmes and teacher perceptions of self-efficacy. They found a positive relationship between teachers' efficacy beliefs and their success in implementing innovations. The study of Cousins and Walker (2000) among 310 Canadian educators found that teachers with higher levels of efficacy for teaching had the tendency to value innovations in education. Guskey (1988) found that teachers with high efficacy were ready to integrate new practices beneficial to their students into their current teaching. Kruse (1997) contended that teachers with greater efficacy had the reflective abilities to identify innovations and changes necessary in their teaching profession. The work of Hsiao et al. (2011) among 546 secondary school teachers in Taiwan indicated that there was a strong positive relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their innovative work

behaviour. Nie et al. (2013) conducted a large scale survey study to examine the role of teacher efficacy in implementing instructional innovation. They found a positive correlation and suggested that policy makers and school leaders need to foster teacher's efficacy beliefs in order to implement innovative instructions in the classroom effectively.

4.2.4 Teacher efficacy and its relationship with student motivation and achievement

Pintrich and Schunk (2003: 5) define motivation as "a process for goal-directed activity that is instigated and sustained". The motivation theory of Gardner (1985) contends that when students perceive their teachers care about their learning they are motivated to learn and achieve. Thus studies (e.g. Wenzel, 1994, 1998; Stipek et al., 1998; Pan, 2014; Ford, 2012; Caprara et al., 2003; Bay et al., 2010) have sought to understand connections between teacher self-efficacy and students' motivation.

4.2.4.1 Teacher self-efficacy and students' motivation

The literature reviewed in this section are discussed under the following themes such as motivating students through efficient delivery of the subject matter, promoting pro-social classroom behaviours, suitable learning environment and efficacy supported by teachers' personal attributes.

i) Motivating students through efficient delivery of subject matter

Stipek et al. (1998) found that teachers with high self-efficacy encourage their students to understand the subject matter. They treat students' lack of understanding of the subject matter and try to make the lesson more meaningful to them by using visual aids and other available means. Moreover they encourage their students to enter into conversations to give them constructive feedback on their performance rather than giving scores to their assignments. The work of Caprara et al. (2003) with over 2000 teachers in seventy-five Italian junior high schools also showed that teachers' self-efficacy could positively influence their students' learning motivation.

- ii) Motivating students through promoting pro-social classroom behaviours

Wenzel's work (1994) found that students' perception of positive aspects of their teachers motivated them to cultivate pro-social classroom behaviours such as getting along with fellow students and becoming more socially responsible. In contrast, students who perceived their teachers as harsh were likely to show poor social behaviour and less interest in their academic performance (Wenzel, 1998).

- iii) Motivating students through suitable learning environment

The work of Pan (2014) with 462 physical education teachers and 2681 students from a high school in Taiwan showed that teachers' self-efficacy could positively influence students' learning motivation, learning atmosphere and learning satisfaction. Bay et al. (2010) found in their study with 229 prospective teachers that teachers with high self-efficacy could create a learning environment which supported democratic values such as learner autonomy, appreciation, justice, respect for different ideas, acceptance of cultural and racial differences among students, shared understanding, cooperating with others, taking responsibility and welcoming critical thinking.

- iv) Motivating students through efficacy supported by personal attributes

Student motivation can be enhanced through teachers whose efficacy beliefs are supported by their personal attributes such as their teaching experience, gender and the grades (year group of students) they are assigned to. Ford (2012) studied the relationship between urban American teachers' efficacy and urban student motivation. He studied the relationship under three aspects: teachers' teaching experience, the grade they were assigned to teach and their gender. Ford found that the teachers with more teaching experience had significantly higher beliefs in their ability to motivate students than those with little experience. Regarding the grades teachers were assigned to, it was found that teachers in elementary and middle school grades were able to show higher ability to motivate their students than those who were in the high schools. Ford found that younger students were more eager to learn and obedient to teachers than the high school students.

Regarding teacher gender more female teachers found it easy to motivate their students than their male counterparts.

4.2.4.2 Teacher self-efficacy and students' achievement

Teacher self-efficacy beliefs have influence on the success of students (Allinder, 1994; Chacon, 2005; Ross, 1992; Tournaki and Podell, 2005). According to Fives (2003), McLaughlin and Marsh (1978) are considered to be the pioneer researchers who studied the link between teachers' self-efficacy and students' achievement. They proposed a causal chain from teacher efficacy to student achievement, and argued that a teacher's level of efficacy will affect his or her behaviour which in turn will affect the students' behaviour, and finally the students' behaviour will make changes in student achievement levels.

The literature reviewed in this section produced the following themes: student achievement through efficient classroom teaching, efficacy supported by professional development, efficacy among culturally diverse students and efficacy supported by student behaviours.

i) Student achievement through efficient classroom teaching

Efficient classroom management is important for the success of students. Teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs are more likely than teachers with low self-efficacy to introduce teaching innovations in the classroom, to manage the class efficiently, to use necessary teaching methods to aid their students' autonomy in learning and to take care of the students with special learning needs (Allinder, 1994). They also easily manage classroom problems (Chacon, 2005).

ii) Student achievement through efficacy supported by professional development

Teachers' efficacy beliefs can be enhanced through continuous professional development such as guidance by mentors or coaches. The work of Ross (1992) with eighteen grade seven and eight history teachers and six coaches investigated the relationship among teacher efficacy, teachers' contacts with the coaches and student achievement. The study found that students' achievement was higher in

the classrooms where the teachers had extensive contacts with their coaches and where the teachers had high teacher efficacy beliefs.

- iii) Student achievement through efficacy among culturally diverse students

Tucker et al. (2005) showed that there is evidence to support the theory that teachers with a high or medium sense of self-efficacy are more likely to enable their students to achieve success in learning than the teachers with a low sense of self-efficacy. According to Tucker et al. (ibid.) teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy aim to support student achievement, particularly among culturally diverse students, through setting realistic and achievable goals for them, ensuring classrooms are a safe learning environment and providing different kinds of student feedback.

- iv) Student achievement through efficacy supported by student behaviours

The study of Raudenbush, Rowan and Cheong (1992) and Ross (1988) showed a mutual effect between teachers' perceived self-efficacy and students' achievement. These studies revealed that teachers with high-achieving and well-behaved students revealed high levels of perceived self-efficacy. Teachers with talented and disciplined students were likely to be more successful in teaching than the teachers with students who had disciplinary problems.

4.2.5 Teacher efficacy and teacher effectiveness

There are numerous research studies (e.g. Fives, 2003; Friedman and Kass, 2002; Balam, 2006; Klassen and Tze, 2014; Woodcock, 2011) on teacher efficacy in relation to various aspects of education. However, since the current study was inspired by retired principals and teachers of English and resources personnel who blamed students poor English skills on the ineffectiveness of the teachers of English in Jaffna, and conversely English teachers who blamed the low student attainment on their teaching efficacy, the following section reviews some teacher efficacy literature to show its relationship to teacher effectiveness. Many studies show that teachers'

personal efficacy can contribute to teacher effectiveness in a number of ways. Such studies have generated the following themes.

4.2.5.1 Self-efficacy transfers skills to the classroom

Teachers with positive self-efficacy are willing to transfer the skills learned in their in-service training to the classroom (Bray-Clark and Bates, 2003).

Teachers with high self-efficacy tend to show their willingness to employ alternative teaching methods, seek improved teaching approaches and experiment with instructional materials (Allinder, 1994; Fritz et al., 1995).

4.2.5.2 Self-efficacy facilitates classroom management

Studies (e.g. Ashton and Webb, 1986; Woolfolk et al., 1990) have revealed that teachers' sense of efficacy is associated with classroom management and organization strategies. Ashton and Webb (ibid.) say that teachers with low personal efficacy find it difficult to manage behavioural problems in the classroom. Such low personal teaching efficacy tends to criticise students for their failures, show impatience when confronted with challenges in problematic situations (Gibson and Demo, 1984) and enforce strict punishment procedures such as abusing students verbally and sending them out of the class during lessons. On the other hand teachers with high efficacy are considered able to cope well and build trust with their students by remaining friendly with them. As a result, they are able to deal with the behavioural problems of the students in satisfying ways (Woolfolk et al. 1990).

4.2.5.3 Self-efficacy gives ability to respond in times of stress

Teachers' who assume the external factors of their teaching contexts to be more influential than their own teaching skills believe that they cannot improve their students' learning, particularly of those who are deemed to be low-performing. Such situations are likely to result in higher levels of stress and teacher burnout (Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010). In contrast, teachers with high personal efficacy often tend to set higher year-end targets for their

students' performance (Allinder, 1995). They also become motivated and tend to persevere through the challenges and stress (Stripling, Ricketts, Roberts, & Harlin, 2008) they encounter in teaching and learning.

4.2.5.4 High self-efficacy in certain subjects produces high student achievements

Studies showed that teachers with high personal efficacy in relation to their ability to teach their subject(s) produced higher student achievement in their respective subjects (Ross, Hogaboam-Gray, and Hanay, 2001). Studies also showed that such teachers with high self-efficacy in their subjects were persistent in helping their students (Soodak, & Podell 1993), less critical of students errors (Ashton & Webb, 1986), more organised and well planned in their teaching (Allinder, 1994) and set high goals for themselves and their students (Ross, 1995).

4.2.5.5 Self-efficacy has implications for overall school effectiveness

The study of Oliver (2001) found that teachers with high self-efficacy appeared to be more prevalent to high-performing schools. However, "there is evidence that teacher self-efficacy may be a key mediating factor between a school's climate and professional culture and its educational effectiveness" (Bobbett, 2001; Tshannan-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998 as cited in Bray-Clark and Bates, 2003: 15). Teachers with high self-efficacy tend to exhibit higher levels of professional commitment which in turn increases school effectiveness (Coladarci, 1992).

Teacher efficacy in relation to current study

The literature on teacher efficacy or teachers' self-efficacy which were reviewed above explored various positive teacher and student outcomes in relation to the efficacy of the teachers. The studies investigated what changes occurred in the classrooms or among students when teachers had a high level of efficacy. The studies also revealed what negative elements or outcomes occurred when the efficacy of the teachers was low. In other words the literature investigated what

positive or negative actions were produced when the belief of the teachers about their ability to affect student learning was high or low.

The literature review revealed that research on teacher efficacy is rarely conducted in Sri Lankan contexts. Therefore the current study seeks to build on existing studies by exploring how and to what extent the efficacy of teachers of English in high and low-performing schools in Jaffna is affected by various classroom challenges and other problems. Like some of the studies discussed here, the current study utilises both quantitative and qualitative methods to get a deeper understanding of Jaffna English teachers' sense of efficacy (see Chapter Five).

4.3 Key aspects of literature for the current study

- The literature reviewed does not provide a universally standard definition for effective teaching or teachers since these concepts imply varieties of aspects or elements of effectiveness. It is because education and teaching objectives keep on changing according to the needs of the time and contexts. Hence defining effective teaching or teachers takes into consideration the needs and demands of the contexts of education.
- There are many effective characteristics which can be applied for all disciplines such as mastery in subject-matter, sound pedagogical knowledge, good communicative skills, creating a suitable learning environment, being available and helpful to students, friendliness and so on. However, second language (L2) teaching and learning because of its distinctive nature demands certain specific effective characteristics.
- The literature reviewed indicates that effective characteristics specific to L2 teaching can be categorized into two areas: what to teach and how to teach. Regarding *what* to teach, the literature generally highlights the communicative competence of students. Regarding *how* to teach, the literature sheds light on teacher properties such as the proficiency of English, their pedagogical knowledge and their socio-affective qualities, and their effective teaching skills such as lesson preparation and presentation and efficient use of the students' first language to teach English as a second language.
- The effective second language teaching characteristics reviewed in the literature have some implications to the teachers of English particularly in relation to their teacher education and continuous professional development programmes in Sri Lanka. Teachers' English language proficiency and their pedagogical knowledge especially of effective preparation and presentation of the lesson and the efficient use of students'

first language in the teaching of English may be given special attention during the preparation and development of the teachers of English. The literature also implies the importance of the socio-affective qualities of the teachers as they need them to motivate students particularly those who are exposed to the consequences of the civil war in Sri Lanka which ended in 2009.

- An important aspect of the literature reviewed is that these teacher properties need to be utilized in context specific teaching approaches which have to be created by the teacher by maintaining a good rapport with the learner. The teacher who provides a context specific teaching approach is also expected to provide a suitable learning atmosphere not only for the learner to learn but also for him/herself to learn from the learner.
- As a continuation of the thought on the context specific teaching approach, the Sri Lankan-based literature on effective teaching of English were found to be based on the needs of the educational contexts of Sri Lanka: computer aided learning to enhance students' listening and speaking skills, material adaptation to address student heterogeneity, increasing teacher-student interaction with varieties of learning materials to promote communicative language teaching and encouraging students' natural learning strategies to enhance second language learning.
- Teacher efficacy is defined in the literature and this thesis as teachers' beliefs in their abilities to affect student performance. The construct of teacher efficacy is the result of two different theoretical perspectives, Rotter's (1966) locus of control theory and Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory.
- While teachers' self-efficacy relates to the confidence of individual teachers in their ability to promote student learning, collective teacher efficacy relates to the perception a group of teachers have about their

ability to affect the academic performance of their students. They can be called personal teaching efficacy and general teaching efficacy respectively.

- Teacher efficacy effects positive teacher outcomes i.e., teachers with a high sense of teacher efficacy set high expectations for students and themselves, cultivate teacher behaviours which can foster student learning, make decisions in favour of student learning needs and respond to innovation and change in teaching.
- Teachers with high teacher efficacy enhance student motivation. They motivate them with efficient delivery of the subject matter, through promoting pro-social classroom behaviours, through a suitable learning environment and through efficacy supported by their personal attributes such as their teaching experience, gender and the group of students they are assigned to.
- Teacher efficacy also enhances student achievement. Teachers with high teacher efficacy help their students achieve in learning through efficient classroom teaching, through efficacy supported by their professional development, through efficacy among culturally diverse students and through efficacy supported by their student behaviours.
- The efficacy of teachers' plays a vital role in enhancing teacher effectiveness. It has its impact on teacher effectiveness in many ways such as it enables teachers' to exercise their skills in the classroom, cope with challenges and stress in teaching, increase student achievement and overall school effectiveness.

Chapter summary

This chapter reviewed the literature on effective teaching of English and teacher efficacy. The literature was reviewed under three sections. The first section presented some literature to define the meaning of effective teaching in general. Then the literature on the distinctive characteristics of second language teaching was reviewed and finally the literature on effective teaching of English was presented. Some Sri Lankan-based literature on the effective teaching of English

was also reviewed. The second section reviewed literature on teacher efficacy: its definitions, the difference between general and personal teacher efficacy, its relationship with positive teacher outcomes, student motivation and achievement, and its impact on teacher effectiveness. The third section of the chapter presented some key aspects of the literature for the current study.

5. Methodology and Data Collection

Introduction

This chapter has three main sections. The first section presents an understanding of the research method adopted in the current study. The second section presents the research strategy which explains how the research questions were answered and the objectives of the research were achieved through the proposed research method. The third section presents the overall processes of the current research and the different steps followed in the study particularly the designing of the research instruments, sample selection, data collection and the analysis of data.

5.1 Research Method

Research is a process of arriving at a dependable solution to problems through a planned and systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data (Cohen et al., 2011). The planned and systematic procedure through which data is collected, analysed and interpreted is known as a research method. The method employed determines the type of research either as quantitative or qualitative.

‘Whereas, quantitative research refers to counts and measures of things, qualitative research refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things’ (Anderson, 2006: 3). With the development and legitimacy of quantitative and qualitative research, the combination of both types of research expanded (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003) as mixed methods research.

5.1.1 Mixed methods research

Mixed methods research is widely used and becoming increasingly ‘recognized as the third major research approach’ along with quantitative and qualitative research (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner, 2007: 112). ‘Mixed methods research means

adopting a research strategy employing more than one type of research *method*. The methods may be a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, a mix of quantitative methods or a mix of qualitative methods' (Brannen, 2005: 4). The research strategy employed in the current research was a mix of qualitative (interviews, observations) and quantitative (questionnaires) methods.

5.1.1.1 Understanding of mixed methods research

'Mixed methods research integrates qualitative and quantitative methods' (Pluye and Hong 2014: 30).

For Mingers (2001) mixed methods research is a research framework that combines various research methods, both quantitative and qualitative, with a predominance of either of these two. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) defined mixed methods research as research in which more than one method or more than one worldview is used. They observed that "the emergence of mixed methods as a third methodological movement in the social and behavioural sciences began during the 1980's" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003: 697) when it was considered possible to combine qualitative and quantitative methods of scholarly inquiry as "the third research community" (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009: 4 cited in Graff 2010). At the time of the emergence of mixed methods research, Bonoma (1985) understood it as collecting different kinds of data through different methods and from different sources in order to provide a fuller picture of the problem under study than would have been achieved otherwise. As well as aiding data collection, mixed methods approaches can be applied to data analysis where different data analytical techniques are used in a single study:

Mixed methods research involves the use of more than one approach or method for research design, data collection or data analysis within a single program of study, with integration of the different approaches or methods occurring during the program of study, (...) (Bazeley, 2010: 1).

All the definitions above given by different authors highlight a common characteristic of mixed methods research that is the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches or methods to data collection and analysis.

According to Cresswell and Plano Clark (2007), because of the combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches the complexity of the research problem is better understood in mixed methods research than in either the quantitative or qualitative approach alone. This is supported by Pluye and Hong (2014):

Mixed methods are used to combine the strengths of, and to compensate for, the limitations of quantitative and qualitative methods. We offer three main reasons for mixing methods. First, researchers may need qualitative methods to interpret quantitative results. Second, they may need quantitative methods to generalize qualitative findings. Third, they may concomitantly need both methods to better understand a new phenomenon (qualitative methods) and to measure its magnitude, trends, causes, and effects (quantitative methods) (Pluye and Hong, 2014: 30).

In the light of what was said by the different authors above, the following section discusses the reasons why mixed methods research was employed in the current study.

5.1.1.2 The reasons why mixed methods research was employed

One of the important advantages of using mixed methods research is to obtain a richer understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Bonoma, 1985; Mingers, 2001): in this case, the perceptions of teachers of English of the effectiveness of their teaching of English. The classroom problems and challenges faced by teachers of English in Sri Lanka are complicated as they are closely connected to the effects of the prolonged civil war which ended in 2009, wider politicisation of and corruption in the education system and the socio-economic disparities among students (Annual Report on Human Rights, 2009; ICG, 2012; IRIN, (nd); Research Report, 2009). As such, the problems need more than a single point of view to be understood in their complexity (Cf: Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2007), and so as to avoid possible misinterpretation. Since mixed methods research combines (Mingers, 2001) or integrates (Pluye and Hong, 2014) different research instruments (quantitative and qualitative) to enable the researcher to approach the context from different points of view it was found to be particularly appropriate to the current study.

The aspect of triangulation (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003) was another reason for mixed methods research to be employed in the current research. A fuller picture of the research phenomenon can be achieved by triangulating the data obtained from different sources. “(...) triangulation is defined as the mixing of data or methods so that diverse viewpoints or standpoints cast light upon a topic” (Olsen, 2004: 3). Olsen calls diverse viewpoints upon a research problem as a dialectic of learning.

The resulting dialectic of learning thrives on the contrasts between what seems self-evident in interviews, what seems to underlie the lay discourses, what appears to be generally true in surveys, and what differences arise when comparing all these with official interpretations of the same thing (ibid: 4).

Hence, triangulation does not simply mean presenting different viewpoints on a topic as they appear rather it involves presenting different viewpoints, evaluating their impacts on one another and interpreting them in their totality in relation to the question under investigation. Rugg (2010) highlights “four types of triangulation originally identified by Denzin in the 1970s: (1) data triangulation; (2) investigator triangulation; (3) theory triangulation; and (4) methodological or method triangulation” (p. 14). The current study employed the method triangulation which involved qualitative (interviews and lesson observations) and quantitative (questionnaires) methods to study the situation. Olsen says, “The mixing of methodologies, e.g. mixing the use of survey data with interviews, is a more profound way of triangulation” (2004: 3). By employing the method triangulation, the current study used the results of one method to enhance, argue and clarify the results of other methods. Besides the method triangulation, the current study also had elements of data triangulation which involves different sources of information about the topic under investigation. The different sources in the current study were students, teachers of English, principals, retired teachers of English and resources personnel of English language teaching. The findings of the different sources were corroborated, weaknesses in the findings of one source were compensated by the findings of another and false interpretations were reduced (Rugg, 2010). Hence the aspect of triangulation was found to be

beneficial in the current study which dealt with complicated problems of the English teaching and learning contexts of Sri Lanka.

More specifically, the current study integrated questionnaires (quantitative method) and interviews and lessons observation (qualitative methods). Certain kinds of research instruments were found to be more suitable with certain categories of participants than others. For example, since the current study involved a large number of students, questionnaires were found to be more appropriate to obtain general information from the student sample than interviews. The interview data from the student sample would be so huge that it would be impossible to analyse them within the time frame of the current research. However, since the number of principals and other educational authorities who participated in the study was small, interviews were found to be more beneficial to obtain in-depth data from them. Besides questionnaires and interviews, a research instrument which enabled the researcher to gather live data from natural situations (Cohen et al., 2007) were lesson observations. The students and teachers provided in the questionnaires their views on their learning and teaching experiences and various problems they encountered in the classrooms. In the lesson observations the teacher and student behaviours were used as a way of verifying or contradicting what had been reported in the questionnaires and teacher interviews. As the classes observed also included students who had not participated in a questionnaire, the lesson observations were also used as a way of throwing further light on the challenges encountered in the teaching and learning of English. Hence, in relation to the current study the mixed methods research offered the participants effective ways of furnishing the data according to their status (see *Table 14*) and circumstances.

Having defined mixed methods research and explained why it was used in the current study, the following section explains the strategy of the research used in the current study.

5.2 Research strategy

This section outlines how the current study utilised the mixed methods research approach. First, the research questions are presented. Second, the purpose of a preliminary study in relation to the main study is explained. Third, the main research goal and the objectives are defined according to the main research question. Finally, the research procedure shows how the main research goal and the objectives were carried out through different stages of the research study.

5.2.1 Research question

The main research question which was tackled in this research was:

1. How do the teachers of English (in **Jaffna**) perceive various classroom and other related problems (such as socio-economic and political issues which are **connected to the teachers' profession**) affected their English teaching efficacy?

Prior to investigating the main research question, a sub-research question was answered through a preliminary study:

2. Are the teachers whose students perform very well in English providing more effective teaching to their students than the teachers whose students underperform in English?

The need for considering the sub-research question is explained in the next section.

5.2.2 Purpose of a preliminary study

The preliminary study in the current research had two aims. The first aim was to establish the operational criteria or definitions to be used in conducting the main study. Operational definitions in a research programme serve two important purposes: (1) They establish the rules and procedures to measure the key variables of the study, and (2) they provide unambiguous meaning to terms used in order to prevent the data from being misinterpreted (Fisher et al., 2002). Teachers of English, principals, resource personnel and retired teachers of English in Jaffna were involved through questionnaires and interviews in achieving this aim. In

order to establish the operational criteria which were necessary to address the main research question the following two preparatory questions were formed:

1. According to the current teachers of English, what are the various classroom and related socio-economic and political problems associated with the English language teaching (ELT) programme in the secondary schools in the district of Jaffna?
2. According to principals, retired teachers of English and resource personnel of ELT, what are the most needed aspects of effectiveness in teaching English teaching in secondary classrooms in the district of Jaffna?

The second aim of the preliminary study was to answer the sub-research question mentioned above. It was the experience of the researcher (as a former teacher of English in Jaffna) that when teachers were blamed by the educational authorities for their lack of effectiveness in teaching English, they often compared their students' poor performance with the high performance of the students in some leading schools. Hence, before investigating how various classroom problems affected the English teaching efficacy, the researcher wanted to establish whether the high-performing students in leading schools really received more effective English lessons from their teachers. This second aim was achieved by obtaining information from students through questionnaires and observing their English lessons. It was believed by the researcher that the findings of the sub-research question would help to elicit a better understanding of teachers' perceptions in the main study.

5.2.3 Purpose of the main study

The purpose of the main study was to deal with the central research question of the study i.e., how the teachers of English (in Jaffna) perceive various classroom and other related problems (such as socio-economic and political issues which are connected to the teachers' profession) affected their English teaching efficacy. The purpose was achieved by distributing questionnaires to teachers of English and interviewing those who volunteered from those questionnaire participants. The questions for designing the questionnaire and the interview were formulated from the data gathered in the preliminary study. A better understanding of the

teachers' perception in the main study was gained by incorporating the findings of the preliminary study in which the other participants such as the students, principals, resource personnel and retired teachers of English were involved through questionnaires, interviews and lesson observations.

5.2.4 Research goal and objectives

The main research goal of the current study, based on the central research question, was to achieve an in-depth understanding of teachers' perceptions as to how various classroom and other related problems affected their English teaching efficacy in schools in Jaffna. In order to achieve this main research goal, two objectives were set up based on the two preparatory questions mentioned in the previous section.

- i. Determining various problems frequently faced by teachers in the classroom and in their overall teaching context
- ii. Defining the elements of effective teaching of English which were considered to be beneficial to students

These two objectives were set to obtain information necessary to design the research instruments to investigate the main research problem. In other words they were set out to establish the operational definitions necessary to achieve the main research goal in the main study.

5.2.5 Research procedure

Since the two research objectives mentioned above were set to establish the operational definitions to conduct the main study, they were achieved through relevant research instruments (questionnaires to students and teachers, lesson observations and interviews with teachers, resource personnel, principals and retired teachers) in a preliminary study prior to the main study. From the information gathered from the preliminary study, a main study was designed to achieve the main research goal in which the current teachers of English participated through questionnaires and interviews. *Table 3* summarises the details of the research procedure described here.

Table 3. The research procedure

The Procedure of Research			
Research Stages	Participants	Research Instruments	Research Methods
Preliminary Study →	Students →	Questionnaire →	Quantitative
	Teachers →	Questionnaire →	Quantitative
	Students & Teachers →	Lesson Observations →	Qualitative
	Principals	Interview →	Qualitative
	Resource Personnel Retired Teachers }		
Main Study →	Teachers }	Questionnaire →	Quantitative
		Interviews →	Qualitative

5.3 Overall processes of the current research

This section presents all the details on data collection and the analysis of data.

The discussion on data collection is presented in two sections: the preliminary study and the main study, so they read chronologically. However, before moving onto these, it is proper to explain the rationale for the use of the research tools and how the participants particularly the students and teachers were classified in the current research.

5.3.1 Rationale for the use of research tools

The current study employed a mixed method research approach using questionnaires as one of the research tools along with interviews and lesson observations, in order to obtain a richer and more in-depth understanding of the research problem by approaching it from different points of view.

5.3.1.1 Questionnaires

“Questionnaires are doubtless one of the primary sources of obtaining data in any research endeavour” (Zohrbi, 2013: 254). They are a widely used and useful type of instrument for collecting information (Colosi, 2006). Colosi (ibid.) also said that questionnaire analysis is comparatively straightforward. Questionnaires were utilized in this study to get general information from a group of the sample, particularly from students. In understanding the problems affecting the teaching efficacy of the teachers of English, students’ views are very important and inevitable as they (students) are connected to the classroom problems faced by the teachers. Since students were large in number, compared to interviews and lesson observations, the questionnaire was found to be an easy but efficient way of collecting their views. Teachers in the preliminary and the main study were also given questionnaires. Though the number of teachers was small it was found useful to get their general views about the problems affecting their teaching efficacy through a questionnaire. The general views of teachers expressed in the questionnaire about the problems affecting their teaching efficacy enabled the researcher to inquire about them in a more in-depth manner in the interviews in which they subsequently participated (see interviews).

The questionnaire includes different kinds of questions which also requires different modes of responses. Cohen et al. (2007) state that the questionnaires given to a larger number of participants may include combinations of more structured, closed and numerical questions. Consequently, the questionnaires which were administered to a larger number of students in the preliminary study included more structured and closed questions such as Yes or No, one-word answer and multiple choice questions.

Closed questions are easy to administer, easily coded and analysed, allow comparisons and quantification, and they are more likely to produce fully completed questionnaires while avoiding irrelevant responses (Sarantakos, 2005 in Bird, 2009: 1311).

Yes or No questions or one-word answer and multiple choice questions have been found to be beneficial particularly in student questionnaires as such questions are comparatively easy to understand by the students and thereby the completion rate of the questionnaire is expected to be high (Bird 2009). In addition such questions are more appropriate to obtain factual information. For example in the current study, closed questions were used to obtain factual information as to whether the students frequently did group activities in the classroom, whether lessons were frequently organized in the English activity room and so on (Timpany, 2015). In relation to the current study, closed questions were found to be really beneficial as the students found it easy to understand and complete the questionnaires within the forty minutes period of the lesson.

In contrast, the teacher questionnaires in the preliminary and main study consisted of more open and word-based questions (Cohen et al., 2007). This is because the number of teacher participants in both the preliminary and the main study was small. The researcher decided that though the open and word-based questions were likely to produce much in-depth data, they would be manageable as the number of the teacher participants was small.

Likert scale questions

Another frequently used question format for questionnaires is Likert scale questions. The Likert scale approach was first introduced by Rensis Likert (1932). It involves a series of statements which are chosen by the participants to rate their responses to evaluative questions (Vogt 1999). Barnette (2012) says that Likert scale questions are “the most used survey methodology in educational and social science research and evaluation” (p. 2). Maeda (2015) gives a general description of the use of Likert scale questions in surveys as follows:

A Likert scale is comprised of multiple Likert items, often eight or more. Each item contains a stem (i.e. phrase or statement) and a scale (i.e. response options). Individuals respond to each stem on numbered response options (i.e. two or more points) that are labelled, for example, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Analysis is performed by summing or

averaging the numerical values assigned to each response (p. 15).

This can be explained in the following example in table 3a.

Table 3a: Example of Likert scale survey

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1) I like using Likert scale questions in my research	1	2	3	4	5
2) I have sufficient knowledge of how to design Likert scale questions	1	2	3	4	5
3) I understand how to analyse Likert scale data	1	2	3	4	5

In the current study the response options were not assigned numerical values as in the above example but the respondents were asked to tick blank boxes (2.13/appendix-2). This is because the researcher did not intend to do any complex statistical analysis (e.g.: t-test or cluster analysis etc.), but only simple descriptive statistics through frequency distribution of the responses (see section 5.3.7.1). Further, the researcher presumed that assigning numerical values to the response options might confuse the respondents, for example they may presume that ***strongly disagree*** is the least option (since it is assigned 1) and ***strongly agree*** is the best option (as it is assigned 5).

There are a number of useful reasons for employing Likert scale questions in research:

1. Vogt (1999) says that questions in Likert scale are generally used to measure attitudes, knowledge, perceptions, values, and behavioural changes of the participants (also see Barnette, 2012).

Knowledge and perceptions were the primary aspects that were measured through Likert scale questions in the current study. The students' questionnaire in the preliminary study included questions with Likert options such as *always, often, sometimes, rarely* and *not at all* in order to measure their knowledge about the learning experience in the classroom. The teachers' questionnaire in the main study included questions with Likert options such as *strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree* and *strongly disagree* in order to obtain the teachers' rated perceptions of how their English teaching efficacy was affected by various classroom problems.

2. An important advantage of using Likert scale questions is that the respondents are not forced to express an either-or opinion as in closed questions, or provide irrelevant information or run the risk of misunderstanding the intent of the question as in open-ended questions. Since the questions use a scale, the respondents can choose the response option that best reflects their position on the negative to positive dimension. In other words, Likert scale questions are useful to measure the attitude of the participants towards the issues under investigation (John, 2010).

For example, in the current study, in expressing their perceptions as to how various problems affected English teaching efficacy, the teachers could be neutral or choose more or less negative or positive responses.

3. Further, collecting data through Likert scale questions is a universally familiar method and thus it is easy to use for research participants (John, 2010).

It was found in the current study that the participants, either the students or teachers, did not need much explanation on how to provide data on Likert scale questions. This suggested that they were familiar with this type of question.

4. It is easy to draw conclusions from the quantitative data obtained from Likert scale questions:

...because responses were comparable across different questions – in each case simply reporting how positively or negatively that respondent was disposed to the attitude object in question – they could be assigned the same numerical codes (...). Furthermore, with multiple items on the same broad object (..), these codes could be summed or averaged to give an indication of each respondent's overall positive or negative orientation towards that object (John, 2010:2).

The current study was conducted among two groups of teachers from low-performing and high-performing schools. From the positive or negative orientation of the respondents towards the questions, it was easy to analyse differences between the perceptions of the teachers in low and high-performing schools respectively.

5. Bird (2009: 1310) refers to Bazeley (2006) regarding the integration of qualitative comments in a questionnaire in order to obtain in-depth understanding of the quantitative responses.

With respect to questionnaires, qualitative comments (e.g. generated from open-ended questions) can be used to corroborate, illustrate or elaborate on the meaning of quantitative responses.

Each question in the central part of the teachers' questionnaire in the main study included a space which allowed the participants to write qualitative comments on the quantitative responses they opted for through the Likert scale questions. The questionnaire for students and teachers in the preliminary study also included necessary open-ended questions for them to elaborate the meaning of the quantitative responses they gave.

The use of Likert scale questions in surveys have been criticised by various authors (e.g. Barnette, 2012; Ogden and Lo, 2011; Krosnick and Presser, 2009; Paul, 2010). Some of the criticisms are discussed below.

1. A very common problem encountered in surveys with Likert scale questions is acquiescence bias. "Acquiescence is a tendency for an individual to

slightly, but consistently ‘agree’ or ‘disagree’ regardless of the stem” (stem refers to the statement which the research participant is asked to react to) (Maeda, 2015: 15).

Krosnick and Presser (2009) say that acquiescence is more likely to occur when a question is difficult or when respondents become tired of answering many questions. They contend that acquiescence bias is likely to be controlled by forming the questions that are easy to comprehend and taking efforts to motivate the respondents to answer the questions carefully.

This was achieved in the current study in relation to the student questionnaires by providing the students with the Tamil translation of the questionnaire so that they could easily comprehend the questions, and would be motivated to answer them. In the case of the teachers, efforts were made to motivate them through comments on the questionnaire information sheet (2.11/appendix-2) which encouraged them to answer all the questions as their responses would be helpful in providing suggestions and recommendations to current teachers of English with a view of enhancing their English teaching efficacy.

2. Another issue with Likert scale surveys is the left-side response option selection bias (Maeda, 2015; Barnette, 2000).

Barnette (2012: 5) says, “there does not seem to be much consensus on which is better, so often the negative left to positive right is preferred”. However, rather than a preference it is argued that the left-side response option leads to selection bias (Barnette, 2000; Maeda, 2015). This was evidenced by Nicholls et al (2006 in Maeda, 2015) who administered to two independent groups of respondents a Likert scale survey with response options designed horizontally in either a descending (strongly agree to strongly disagree) or an ascending (strongly disagree to strongly agree) direction. It was found that the participants were more likely to select the response options located on the left side. Given this finding, to reduce the possibility of left hand selection bias, in the current study the response options were located on the positive left to negative right. This did not seem to create problems for the respondents as they were clearly instructed on how to complete the questionnaire.

Sotto et al (2008) suggested that negatively worded stem can be used to remedy left-hand selection bias. However, studies show that negatively worded stems were likely to confuse the respondents and made them select responses that were opposite to their beliefs (Swain et al, 2008). Barnette (2000) found that negatively worded stems reduced internal consistency reliability, the extent to which all the items on the test measure the same construct or idea (Tang et al., 2014).

Maeda (2015) proposed a new approach which uses vertically oriented response options rather than horizontal ones. Maeda believes that “this may eliminate the left-side selection bias because no response option would be aligned more to the left (or right) than others” (p. 16). However, this would contribute to another problem with the Likert approach that is to increase the length of the survey (Barnette, 2012). Vertically oriented response options need more space on the questionnaire than their horizontally oriented counterparts which will result in excessive stacks of paper (Maeda, 2015) which in turn may make the survey long. Long surveys cause fatigue to respondents and lead to increased dropouts (Serrano, 2015).

3. A further criticism levelled at the use of Likert scales in questionnaires relates to central tendency bias in which a person tends to avoid extreme response categories and thereby responding to most of the questions with the middle response category (Paul, 2010). Mangione (1995) argues that the respondents tend to choose the middle category when they find it difficult to understand the statement, or as Paul (2010) contends, the respondents are not properly qualified to answer the questions or are not fully engaged with the questions. Barnette (2012) says that using an even number of response categories is often used as a strategy to guard against this bias.

In the current study the Likert scale questions for teachers included an odd number (five) of response options and thereby included a neutral point i.e., *neither agree nor disagree*. However, the respondents were likely to be guarded against the tendency to choose the middle response category for more or all the questions as all the Likert statements in the questionnaires were

clear in meaning. Further there is a benefit in including a neutral category as it serves the respondents when they truly feel neutral about a statement. In such situations, if there is no middle category the respondents are forced to choose a more positive or negative response (Paul, 2010).

4. Another problem with Likert scale questions is the occurrence of missing data. Missing data occurs where there is a non-response on the part of the respondents on one or more items on the questionnaire. Some items which are personal to the respondents, such as income, are more likely to cause a non-response than others. McKnight (2007) contend that one of the reasons for missing data is the content of the instrument, i.e., whether the respondents perceive the questions as not purposeful, not interesting, not related to their field and intrusive.

In the current study, the occurrence of missing data was very much reduced as the questionnaire was totally related to the teachers of English i.e., the respondents. They were well informed about the purpose of the study through the information provided on the questionnaire. Further, the questionnaire questions were likely to be of interest to the teachers' as they dealt with problems and challenges in English teaching. They were also assured privacy and confidentiality in handling the information they shared so that could respond freely and confidently.

5. Social desirability bias is another criticism against Likert scale questions (Kreuter et al., 2008; Tourangeau and Yan 2007). "The concept of social desirability rests on the notions that there are social norms governing some behaviours and attitudes and that people may misrepresent themselves to appear to comply with these norms" (Kreuter et al., 2008: 848). For example, a respondent in a survey may agree with voting which is generally seen as a civic duty or disagree with illicit drug use as it is viewed as an offence.

In the current study possible instances of social desirability bias were likely to be reduced due to respondent anonymity. The student and teacher

participants were provided with instructions on the questionnaire itself, and also by the researcher (and by the colleague of the researcher in the case of the teacher questionnaire in the main study) not to reveal their identity on the questionnaire by writing their name or the name of the school where they taught or were a student. They were also assured that their questionnaire and the information they provided would be protected from being accessed by any person other than the researcher.

Despite the criticisms discussed above, Likert scale questions were found to be useful for the current study because they made it easy to compare the agreement or the disagreement level of the students and teachers in two different groups (i.e. low-performing and high-performing schools) with the same research tool. The students were asked to rate the frequency level of accessing different English learning opportunities in their learning contexts. The teachers were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement level with various problems they encountered in their teaching contexts. The Likert scale approach made it possible to use the same questionnaire with both groups of participants even though their teaching and learning contexts were greatly different from each other in terms of the availability of learning/teaching materials, infrastructure of the schools, learning environment, language exposure, opportunities for professional development and so on.

The Likert scale questions were also useful for their practicality as the current study had to consider numerous issues related to students and teachers. As said in Chapter Two, the learning and teaching contexts in Sri Lanka were very complicated as they were closely linked with thirty years of civil war and other problems such as corruptions and political interferences in the education sector. In order to consider all the issues relevant to the current study, the teachers' questionnaire included sixty-one statements within seven main questions (2.13/appendix-2). It was possible to include so many items without adding too many pages to the questionnaire through the use of Likert scale questions.

Another reason why Likert scale questions were useful in the current study is because they were suitable to the research participants in terms of the time available to engage in the research. The student participants were available to participate in the questionnaire during their English lesson which was only forty minutes in length. Likert questions were found to be helpful to gather a lot of information from students during such a short period of time. The Likert questions were likely to be helpful to the teacher participants also, particularly the married teachers, as they allowed the teachers to do the questionnaire without spending much time on it. This was important as the study found the teacher participants were engaged with various school tasks as well as their personal family commitments.

5.3.1.2 Interviews

Along with questionnaires and lesson observations which are quantitative and a qualitative research instruments respectively, interviews were added as another qualitative research tool to enhance the value of the mixed method research approach. The necessity for including interviews as a research tool in the current study was found to be very important as they could provide more in-depth understanding than the questionnaires and lesson observations as to how various problems affected English teaching efficacy. The questionnaires in the current study were helpful but only to obtain a general view of a wider sample of the participants. The lesson observations were a unique qualitative research tool in the current study as it helped the researcher to gather data from the behaviours of students and teachers in natural classroom settings. However there was a risk the researcher could misinterpret the behaviours of the participants. Though the researcher had opportunities to talk with the teachers after each lesson observation to clarify certain things that happened during the lessons, the time was too short to get detailed clarifications (see 5.3.1.3). Further, the lesson observations could capture the problems affecting the teaching efficacy of the teachers of English only within the boundaries of the classroom. The interview as a qualitative research tool was found to be suitable to remedy these drawbacks. Through

interviews the researcher was able to access in-depth teacher perceptions not only of the classroom problems but also about the socio-economic and political problems which could affect the effectiveness of the English lessons conducted by the teachers.

Interviews as a qualitative research instrument were used in the current research with teachers (in the preliminary and main study), principals, retired teachers and resources personnel (in the preliminary study) to obtain their in-depth understanding of Sri Lankan and in particular Tamil teacher effectiveness in teaching in English. The interviews were used to understand the perceptions of the current teachers of English about the challenges they encountered in teaching English effectively. According to Cohen et al:

Interviews enable participants – be they interviewers or interviewees –to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view (Cohen et al. 2007: 349).

The current research utilised semi-structured interviews which included open-ended questions in order to obtain specific information on the phenomenon under investigation (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006) that was the information about the elements of effective teaching of English and teachers' perceptions how their teaching efficacy was affected by various problems. Semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to be open and flexible so that they may probe the experiences of the individual participants in more detail, which in turn enable comparison across cases (ibid.).

In semi-structured interviewing, a guide is used, with questions and topics that must be covered. The interviewer has some discretion about the order in which questions are asked, (...). Semi-structured interviews are often used when the researcher wants to delve deeply into a topic and to understand thoroughly the answers provided (Harrell and Bradley, 2009: 27).

Since the semi-structured interview generates detailed data, though transcribing the data and analysing the transcripts are very time-consuming (Phellas, Bloch and Seale, 2012), it is useful where there is a small number of participants, as in the current study. It was also found to be useful since the current study investigated a specific area i.e., teacher perceptions of their English teaching efficacy.

(Semi-structured interviews) are suited to working with small samples and are useful for studying specific situations (...). In addition, since they provide access to perceptions and opinions, they are effective for gaining insight into problems that are not immediately perceptible but that nonetheless cause concern in certain areas or in certain segments of the population (Laforest et al. 2009: 1).

The current study employed face-to-face (in the preliminary study), telephone and Skype interviews (in the main study). Since the current study required in-depth information from the participants, the face-face-to interviews were found to be very effective as they allowed the researcher to ask additional questions to collect detailed information (Becker and UBA-Team, 2011). Further, Vogl (2013) who emphasizes the importance of personal contact in qualitative interviews argues that the absence of visual communication can make a telephone interview appear less personal and more anonymous. These positive features of face-to-face interviews were absent in the telephone interviews which were the primary remote interviews used in the main study. However, the main study highly benefited from the telephone interviews as they provided the researcher, who was unable to travel to the research location due to the lack of financial resource, with an efficient and economical way to obtain the experiences of distant participants (Hill et al., 2005; Kee and Browning, 2013). The current research also conducted a few interviews via Skype. The absence of the body language and reaction of the participants in the telephone interviews was remedied to some extent in the Skype interviews as they allowed the researcher to view the interviewees and how they reacted when responding to the interview questions (Sullivan, 2012).

5.3.1.3 Lesson Observation

Lesson observation was used as a qualitative data instrument in the current study, along with interviews to get an in-depth understanding of the learning and teaching experience of students and teachers and various activities carried out and problems encountered in the classroom during the teaching of an English lesson during the data collection period. The questionnaires provided general views of the teachers and students on their teaching and learning experiences in the classroom. The interviews revealed in-depth knowledge of the same classroom experiences. However, the lesson observations enabled the researcher to observe in real life what the students and teachers reported in the questionnaire and interviews. Through observing what happens in real life the researcher is given opportunities to have concrete evidence of what he was informed. Since this unique aspect of the data collection was available in observation method, lesson observations of English classes were conducted in the current study.

The distinctive feature of observation as a research process is that it offers an investigator the opportunity to gather 'live' data from naturally occurring social situations. In this way, the researcher can look directly at what is taking place in situ rather than relying on second-hand accounts (Cohen et al., 2007: 396).

Cohen et al., (2007) outline different roles of the observer such as complete participant, participant as observer, observer as participant and complete observer. In the current study, the researcher acted as a complete observer or as Liu and Maitlis (2010) say non-participant observer. Liu and Maitlis (ibid.) say that non-participant observation is often used along with other data collection methods such as questionnaires or interviews so that it can offer more information about the situations which cannot easily be captured by other methods.

Richards and Farrell (2011) say that the observation procedure needs to be carefully planned if the observation is to be effective. They also say that the procedure will depend on the focus of the observation but it often follows certain techniques such as checklists, seating charts, field notes, narrative summary and follow up conversation. The primary focus of the lesson observation in the current study was to see if the overall English learning environment was more advantageous for the high-performing students than the low-performing students

(how low and high-performing students are defined is in section 5.3.2). Based on this observation focus, the lessons were observed by taking down notes and using some checklists (see sections 2.8 and 2.9 in appendix-2). There were also follow up conversations with teachers after each observation in order to clear up any doubts the researcher had about students' or teachers' behaviours or get any information relevant to the observation. However, the conversations were very brief as the teachers had to move on to their next lessons.

Though observation is an effective tool for collecting data in their natural situations, it has some limitations. Lui and Maitlis (2010) say that the presence of the researcher may influence the actions of the participants. This is supported by Richards and Farrell who state '...the presence of an observer in the classroom sometimes influences the nature of the lesson, making the lesson untypical of the teacher's usual style of teaching' (Richards and Farrell, 2011: 91). Lui and Maitlis (ibid.) suggest that a longer period of observation may reduce this, though it will remain a potential issue. Hence, this limitation was addressed by observing three or sometimes four lessons in the same class.

Another shortcoming of observation is that it can never capture everything (Lui and Maitlis, ibid.; Richards and Farrell, ibid.) in the classroom. Richards and Farrell say, 'Teaching is a complex and dynamic activity, and during a lesson many things occur simultaneously, so it is not possible to observe all of them' (ibid: 90). Again a longer period of observation is needed to overcome this setback in observation. Besides conducting three or four lessons observation in the same class as said above, this limitation was resolved to a greater extent by using relevant checklists and taking down notes.

5.3.2 Participants and school classification

The students and teachers in the current research were categorised according to whether they belong to either low-performing or high-performing schools. This classification of schools was informed by the rationale presented in Chapter One that when teachers of English were criticised, the poor performance of their students was often compared to the high-performance of students in a few leading schools in Jaffna. The performance of students in the English language subject in

most of the schools in the Jaffna district is low (Result Analysis – O/L, 2011). Hence their schools are referred to as low-performing schools. However, a small number of National and 1AB schools in every district of Sri Lanka remain high-performing schools because of the performance of students in the public examinations and various extracurricular English activities they have access to. Hence a few schools are referred to as high-performing schools. The researcher used the students' performance in O/L English examination according to the 2011 O/L Exam Results Statistics carried out by the department of education in Jaffna to select low-performing and high-performing schools (Results Analysis-O/L, 2011). The schools which were generally perceived as high-performing schools by the public were found with a more than eighty per cent pass rate in the O/L English exam while the low-performing schools (particularly 1C and Type II schools) had less than a thirty per cent and 1AB low-performing schools had above thirty per cent pass rate. Tables 1.1 and 1.2 of appendix-1 present a detailed account of the background information of the schools involved in the current research.

5.3.3 The preliminary study

This section presents details on three main issues:

- Preliminary study research instruments (their purpose, construction, content and piloting)
- Preliminary study sample and
- Preliminary study data collection

5.3.3.1 Preliminary study research instruments

a) Students' questionnaire

Purpose, construction and content of the students' questionnaire

The overall purpose of the students' questionnaire (section 2.4/appendix-2), based on the sub-research question, was to ascertain the difference between the English language learning opportunities and experience of the students in low-performing and high-performing schools. The fact that the performance of the low-

performing school teachers was compared (by educational authorities) with the high performance of high-performing school students required the researcher to investigate whether the high-performing school teachers provided more effective teaching of English than the low-performing school teachers: Did high-performing school teachers conduct the lesson in really effective ways? Or did they have less problems in the classroom than low-performing school teachers? Or did the high-performing school students have more facilities to learn more English than their counterparts?

The researcher tried to find answers to the aforementioned questions by focusing the questionnaire on two areas. One was to obtain frequency data on the learning opportunities of students based on certain assumptions which prevailed in the educational context of Jaffna; assumptions regarding the learning ability of students, availability of learning opportunities at schools and the socio-economic status of students which were viewed either as advantages or challenges for students to learn English. From the contextual knowledge of the researcher the assumptions of ordinary people, parents and teachers suggest that on the one hand, a few schools were able to show high performance in public examinations because they select students with high ability for learning on the basis of success in the Grade Five scholarship examination (cf Chapter Three/section 3.1.2). On the other hand, many schools in the district of Jaffna had to accommodate the student populace most of whom did not succeed in the Grade Five scholarship examination and thus teachers had to struggle teaching the English language.

It was also assumed that students at high-performing schools became more competent in English than their counterparts because of the educational background of their parents who were likely to help their children with their English lessons and English homework. Moreover it is not unusual, as Bourdieu (1986) and Hartas (2011) claimed that the parents with higher educational and social class background enable their children to gain higher educational credentials. Another assumption was that the high-performing schools due to sufficient human and material resources were able to organise more English Day competitions than the low-performing schools. Such competitions were

considered an additional help for students at high-performing schools to improve their knowledge of English. The socio-economic status of parents also was assumed to influence their children's performance in language learning (Bourdieu 1984; Butler, 2013) as economically affluent parents are able to afford private tuition on the English subject for their children. Hence, questions from two to eleven and from twenty-two to twenty-four in the questionnaire were formed on the issues related to the assumptions explained above. Questions from two to eleven consisted of questions with Yes or No options and multiple choices, and questions which required written answers. The questions from twenty-two to twenty-four were designed in five points Likert scale with the options Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely and Not at all.

The second area focused on in the questionnaire (from questions twelve to twenty-one) was the learning experience of students in the classroom. Questions twelve and thirteen were multiple choices and the rest were designed in five points Likert scales with the same options mentioned in the previous paragraph. The researcher wanted to see whether students at high-performing schools experienced more effective language learning than their counterparts or teachers at low-performing schools provided their students with less effective teaching than teachers at high-performing schools. Hence the questionnaire included appropriate questions for students to express what took place during their daily English language lesson. The researcher also achieved this purpose through lesson observations which are detailed later in this chapter.

The student questionnaire also partly served the purpose of determining one of the operational definitions of the current research. As said in section 5.2.2 one of the operational definitions the researcher had to define was the aspects of effective teaching of English. At the end of the questionnaire he included an open-ended question (Q25) which asked the students what they expected from their teachers of English in relation to their learning.

Piloting and revising students' questionnaire

Piloting of the research instruments is an important stage of a research in which the researcher tests out and makes changes (where necessary) in those research instruments based on feedback from a small number of participants who complete and evaluate the instruments (Creswell, 2005). Forty students (twenty designated by their schools as high-performing and twenty low-performing students) participated in the pilot questionnaire. Both the Tamil and the English versions of the questionnaire were made available to students. All the low-performing school students and most of the high-performing school students chose to complete the questionnaire written in Tamil while a few high-performing school students opted to do the English version. After they had completed the questionnaire, the researcher had a discussion with each group of students to identify questions which the students found difficult to answer and those where further clarification was needed. The questionnaire was revised on the basis of the students' suggestions (section 2.18/table 2.4/appendix-2) and the revised version of the questionnaire (section 2.4/appendix-2) was used in the preliminary study. *Table 4* shows questions in the revised student questionnaire designed to achieve the objectives of the preliminary study.

Table 4. Revised questions of student questionnaire

Objectives of the questions	Questions on the student questionnaire
<p>1) <u>Opportunities for learning English:</u></p> <p>Do students get into HPSs* or LPSs** either because of their pass or failure in G5SE?</p>	<p>3. Did you pass the Grade 5 Scholarship examination?</p>
<p>Do students get better foundation in English because of their primary education?</p>	<p>2. I am learning English from:</p> <p>4. Where did you get your primary education (from Grade 1 – 5)?</p>
<p>Do students get more opportunities to learn English when their parents' socio-economic status is better?</p>	<p>5. What is your father's occupation?</p> <p>6. Does your mother go out to work? If so, what is she?</p> <p>10. Do you go to tuition for English?</p>
<p>Do students get more opportunities to learn English because of the educational background of their family members?</p>	<p>7. What is your father's educational qualification?</p> <p>8. What is your mother's educational qualification?</p> <p>9. Does any member in your family help you with the English lesson?</p>
<p>Do students get more opportunities to learn English at their schools?</p>	<p>11. Do you take part in any events/competitions of your school English day?***</p>
<p>Do students get more opportunities to learn English at home and in their social contexts?</p>	<p>22. I read English books, magazines or newspapers at home.</p> <p>23. I watch English news or some English programme in the TV.</p> <p>24. I have opportunities to listen to elders speak English in my social contexts.</p>
<p>2) <u>Experience of learning English</u></p> <p>What difference do the students at High-Performing Schools and Low-Performing Schools have in their experience of learning English?</p>	<p>From Question 12 to 21****</p>
<p>3) <u>Effective teaching of English from the students' point of view</u></p>	

What are students' expectation from their English teachers?	25. What do you expect from your English teacher regarding learning English in the classroom?
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*High-performing schools **Low-performing schools

***See appendix-2 (section 2.4) for a comprehensive set of answers given to the students to choose from.

****See appendix-2 (section 2.4) for questions from twelve to twenty-one.

b) Teachers' questionnaire

Purpose, construction and content of teachers' questionnaire

The main purpose of the questionnaire was to establish one of the operational criteria i.e., to identify the problems which teachers frequently encountered in their classrooms and also other problems such as socio-economic and political problems which affected their overall teaching. The teachers' questionnaire was categorised under four sections. Section one consisted of questions about teachers' personal background and issues related to their teaching of English. The options to respond to the questions were decided according to the nature of the answers elicited by the questions. Some of the questions elicited straightforward answers such as Yes or No, some questions required the inclusion of multiple-choice answers in order to meet all respondents' needs (Colosi, 2006; Wyse, 2013) and still some other questions required written answers as they related to circumstances of the individual respondents. The other three sections (section two, three and four) included three different lists of several classroom problems and a smaller number of related socio-economic and political problems. These problems were informed by relevant literature and also from the teaching experience of the researcher. The participants were asked to underline in those three lists the problems they frequently encountered in their classrooms. They also were given a chance to write down the problems which were specific to their teaching context but not included in the questionnaire.

Piloting and revising teachers' questionnaire

Five teachers from high-performing schools and five from low-performing schools teaching students from Grade Six to Eleven were given the questionnaires in English and their feedback (section 2.20/table 2.6/appendix-2) was obtained to make necessary changes. The revised questionnaire (section 2.7/appendix-2) was used to obtain data from the teachers. *Table 5* shows questions in the revised teacher questionnaire designed to achieve the objectives of the preliminary study.

Table 5. Revised questions of teacher questionnaire

Objectives of the questions	Questions on the teacher questionnaire
Background information	<u>Section 1:</u> 1. Gender: 2. Age: 3. Marital status: 4. Your highest academic qualification: 5. Your professional qualifications: 6. How many years have you been teaching English?
Issues related to current teaching of English	7. The type of school you are teaching in: 8. The average number of students in your classroom: 9. How many periods (altogether) are you teaching English per week? 10. Are you the only teacher who teaches English (from Gr. 6 - 11) in your school?
Pedagogical problems in English Language Teaching (ELT)	<u>Section 2:</u> List of pedagogical problems*
Socio-economic problems in ELT	<u>Section 3:</u> List of socio-economic problems*
Political problems in ELT	<u>Section 4:</u> List of political problems*

* See Appendix-2 (section 2.7) for the complete lists of problems

c) Lesson observation

Overall purpose of lesson observation

Lesson observations are a useful way of seeing what is happening ‘in situ ... as it requires us to see what is happening rather than what we want to happen, or think is happening’ (Basil 2010: 118). The overall purpose of the lesson observations, was based on the sub-research question which, was to see if there was any difference between the classroom lessons conducted at low-performing and high-performing schools. Through the lesson observations the researcher tried to get answers to the following questions.

- Did high-performing school students have more effective English (see Introduction of Chapter One) lessons than their counterparts?
- Did low-performing school teachers appear to be less effective in their English teaching than their counterparts?
- Did low-performing school teachers have more problems in the English classroom than teachers at high-performing schools?
- Was the overall English learning environment more advantageous for high-performing school students than their counterparts?

In addition, since many students and teachers who participated in the questionnaire also participated in the lesson observations, this research instrument was used as a means to see whether there was conformity between the data given by students and teachers in the questionnaire and what was observed in the classroom. It was also used to identify possible gaps or omissions with the questionnaire data and what was observed.

Construction of observation

The lesson observation followed a primarily semi-structured approach: the researcher took down notes of what was taking place in the classroom and had checklists in order to facilitate his taking down of notes.

Two different checklists (sections 2.8 and 2.9/appendix-2) were prepared for the observation. One covered the *physical setting* and the *human setting* of the classroom (Morrison, 1993: 80 in Cohen et al., *ibid.*): its teaching style, that is whether it was traditional with a teacher teaching from the front or a modern classroom with students sitting in groups; its location, whether it was located in a

fully separated and quiet environment or adjoined with other classrooms in a noisy environment; its facilities whether they were spacious enough to accommodate all students to have group activities and contained the necessary materials and equipment for learning; its human settings that is to say whether students were male or female or the classrooms were mixed gender and illustrative of student socio-economic background. This checklist was prepared by the researcher based on his previous classroom and contextual knowledge and experience of teaching in Sri Lanka.

The other checklist was prepared to observe the following five aspects which were simplified from two settings provided by Morrison (ibid.) i.e., the *interactional settings* and the *programme setting*. The five aspects were:

<i>Teacher</i>	how he/she helped students engage with lessons,
<i>Students</i>	how they participated in learning activities,
<i>Teaching approach</i>	whether the teacher and students cooperated with each other to have more student-centred learning,
<i>Activities</i>	the kind of activities students were mostly engaged with and
<i>Materials</i>	whether the teacher utilised various kinds of materials to motivate students or just used the English textbook as stipulated by the Sri Lankan Ministry of Education alone.

d) Interviews

A semi-structured interview (section 2.10/appendix-2) guided by the main research questions and issues outlined above was conducted with principals, retired teachers of English and resource personnel of English language teaching (*Table 14*) in Jaffna from October 2012 to December 2012. The interviews lasted about thirty minutes. The interview questions were not piloted.

Purpose of the interview

The purpose of the interview with the principals, resource personnel and retired teachers of English in the preliminary study was to determine the operational criteria for the main study, i.e., the aspects of effective teaching of English which the current teachers of English needed to consider in their classrooms. The

interviews sought to understand what the participants meant by effective teaching of English or how they considered one lesson was more effective than another.

5.3.3.2 Preliminary study sample

a) Participants and sampling strategy

The current research included only Tamil participants, as the study was conducted in the district of Jaffna which is populated by the Tamil community. Students and teachers were the primary informants in this research. A purposive sampling strategy was used to select them. In purposive sampling ‘researchers choose cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement’ (Cohen et al., *ibid*: 157) because the cases possess particular characteristics which the researcher seeks to satisfy specific needs of the research. A specific need of the preliminary study was to focus on issues the participants identified in order to define operational definitions for the main study. Students who performed low or high in English were found in all four school types (*Table 2* of section a. ii. of 2.2.1.1) and these schools differed in their characteristics (*Table 1.4/appendix-1*) which have their own impacts on teachers and students as they teach and learn English as a second language. Hence the researcher, on the basis of his judgement and study needs (which was informed by his experiences of teaching in Sri Lankan schools), selected the sample from within these different types of schools. However, the researcher observed that the principals of the schools generally had a tendency to select classes with better performing students, may be in order to safeguard the name of the school or avoid criticism from an outsider about the standard of the students.

Students from Grades Nine and Ten (in secondary school) participated in the current research through questionnaires. The secondary sector in Sri Lankan schools includes students from Grades Six to Eleven. However, the researcher chose students from Grades Nine and Ten to conduct the research with because as older students they had experienced secondary English language learning for a few years and consequently it was believed that these students would be able to draw on their experiences to better respond to the questions than the younger

students in Grades Six to Eight. The researcher could not include students from Grade Eleven as they were having intensive preparation for the approaching O/L examinations during the time of the data collection.

Teachers who participated in the questionnaire included those who taught the students who participated in the questionnaire. However, they were only ten in number. In order to get information from a wider circle of teachers, questionnaires were distributed to the colleagues of those ten teachers and teachers from other schools as well. The teachers had various levels of teaching experience in relation to their number of years of teaching. There were also qualified and non-qualified teachers.

Besides students and teachers, the principals of schools where the teacher participants were teaching, the resource personnel of English language teaching (ELT) from the Department of Education and the retired teachers of English were also included in the current research to obtain relevant data necessary to the research.

Cohen et al. (ibid) refer to Ball (1990) that 'in many cases purposive sampling is used in order to access 'knowledgeable people', i.e. those who have in-depth knowledge about particular issues may be by virtue of their professional role (.....) or experience' (p. 157). As said in chapter one these groups of individuals i.e., the principals, resource personnel of ELT and the retired teachers of English, because of their professional role and experience had expressed their opinion that current teachers of English should have better English teaching efficacy in order to enhance the performance of their students. Hence the current research included these individuals to collect data as to what they considered lacking in the teaching of current teachers and what aspects of English teaching efficacy they recommended to present English classrooms.

b) Number of the sample

i. Number of student participants and schools

Students from ten schools (six low-performing and four high-performing schools) from two educational zones (Zone A and Zone B) volunteered to participate in the

questionnaire. There are five educational zones (named here as A, B, C, D and E) in the district of Jaffna, but the contextual situation in two educational zones was not conducive to conduct the research there. One of the zones was severely affected by the final phase of the civil war in 2009 and as a result people were displaced and normalcy was not fully regained at the time of data collection (ICG, 2012). The other educational zone was avoided by the researcher due to security reasons as it was under the control of a para-military group (Annual Report on Human Rights, 2010) during the period of data collection.

According to the number of the official enrolment of students in each classroom (Tables 1.1 and 1.2/appendix-1), the total number of students in the ten classrooms was 310. The number of questionnaires returned was 298. One hundred and fifty one questionnaires were from six low-performing and 147 questionnaires from four high-performing schools. *Tables 6 and 7* display the summary of the sample. Since there are additional types of schools (1C and Type II) among the low-performing schools they included more schools than the high-performing schools. Among the participants in low and high-performing schools there was a good gender mix as the numbers of male and female students were very near to equal.

Table 6. Low-performing school student participants in questionnaire


Low-performing school students who participated in the questionnaire						
Types of Schools	Number of Schools	Educational Zones	Number of Students	Students' Grades	F	M
Type II 	1	Zone A	21	Grade 10	21	--
Type II	1	Zone B	25	Grade 9	09	16
1C	1	Zone B	25	Grade 9	10	15
1C	1	Zone A	23	Grade 10	08	15
1AB (P)*	1	Zone A	26	Grade 9	26	--
1AB (P)	1	Zone B	31	Grade 10	--	31
Total	6		151		74	77

Table 7. High-performing school student participants in questionnaire

High-performing school students who participated in the questionnaire						
Types of Schools	Number of Schools	Educational Zones	Number of Students	Students' Grades	F	M
1AB (P) →	1	Zone B	35	Grade 9		35
1AB (P)	1	Zone B	31	Grade 10	31	--
1AB (N)*	1	Zone A	41	Grade 10	--	41
1AB (N)	1	Zone A	40	Grade 9	40	--
Total	4		147		71	76

*P = Provincial; N= National

ii. Number of teacher participants and schools

Twenty-nine teachers from Grade Six to Eleven volunteered to participate in the teacher questionnaire. The number of questionnaires received was twenty-four. Fourteen questionnaires were from seven low-performing and ten from five high-performing schools. Tables 8 and 9 display this information.

Table 8. Low-performing school teacher participants in questionnaire

Low-performing school teachers who participated in the questionnaire						
Types of Schools	Number of Schools	Educational Zones	Number of teachers	Students' Grades	F	M
1AB →	2	A & B	5	6 - 11	3	2
1C	3	A & B	5	6 - 11	4	1
Type II	2	A & B	4	6 - 11	2	2
Total	7		14		9	5

Table 9. High-performing school teacher participants in questionnaire

High-performing school teachers who participated in the questionnaire						
Types of Schools	Number of Schools	Educational Zones	Number of teachers	Students' Grades	F	M
1AB →	5	A & B	10	6 -11	6	4
Total	5		10		6	4

iii. Number of lesson observations and schools

English lessons in ten classrooms of Grades Nine and Ten (from five low-performing and five high-performing schools) were observed. Three lessons were observed in each classroom. In certain schools the researcher was able to observe four lessons because of his time availability and more flexibility of the school administrations. In total thirty-four lessons were observed in ten classrooms which represented the different types of schools specific to low and high-performing schools as displayed in *tables 10* and *11*.

Table 10. Low-performing school classrooms for lesson observations

Low-performing school classrooms where the lesson observations took place					
LPSs	Classroom 1	Classroom 2	Classroom 3	Classroom 4	Classroom 5
Number of students →	30	31	23	21	25
Students' Grades	9	10	10	9	9
Type of Schools	1AB (P)	1AB (P)	1C	Type II	1C
Educational Zones	A	B	A	B	B
Gender of Students	Girls	Boys	Mixed	Girls	Mixed

Table 11. High-performing school classrooms for lesson observations

High-performing school classrooms where the lesson observations took place					
HPSs	Classroom 1	Classroom 2	Classroom 3	Classroom 4	Classroom 5
Number of students →	44	41	37	35	33
Students' Grades	10	9	9	10	10
Type of Schools	1AB (N)	1AB (N)	1AB (P)	1AB (P)	1AB (P)
Educational Zones	A	A	B	B	A
Gender of Students	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Girls

The number of classrooms for the lesson observations was decided according to a purposive sampling so that the sample could include all three types of the low-performing schools and the Provincial and the National 1AB high-performing schools in order to represent the whole student populace.

iv. Number of interviewees and schools

The selection of the interviewees was the result of the availability of the identified participants. As displayed in *tables 12* and *13*, five out of ten principals made themselves available to be interviewed.

Table 12. Low-performing school principals in interviews

Low-performing school principals who participated in the interview		
Types of Schools	Number of Schools	Number of principals
1AB Schools →	1	1
1C Schools	2	2
Total	3	3

Table 13. High-performing school principals in interviews

High-performing school principals who participated in the interview		
Types of Schools	Number of Schools	Number of principals
1AB Schools →	2	2
Total	2	2

The number of resource personnel for English language teaching was small and the researcher was able to access three of them for the interview. Regarding the retired teachers of English, though there were many retired teachers, in order to keep a proportion with the number of principals and resource personnel, three retired teachers were selected. *Table 14* presents the summary of the sample involved in the preliminary study.

Table 14. Summary of the sample of the preliminary study

Types of sample	No. of sample	Grades of sample	Number and types of schools the sample belonged to	Types of research instruments the sample engaged with
Students → (Age:15-16)	298	9 & 10	151 from 6 LPSs* & 147 from 4 HPSs**	Questionnaire
Teachers	24	6 - 11	14 from 7 LPSs & 10 from 5 HPSs	Questionnaire
Students (Age:15-16)	320	9 & 10	130 from 5 LPSs & 190 from 5 HPSs	Lesson observations
Teachers	10	6 - 11	5 from 5 LPSs & 5 from 5 HPSs	Lesson observations
Principals	5	N/A	3 from LPSs & 2 from HPSs	Interview
Retired Teachers	3	N/A	N/A	Interview
Resource Persons	3	N/A	N/A	Interview
Total Participants	663			

*Low-performing schools

**High-performing schools

5.3.3.3 Preliminary study data collection

a) Student questionnaire

The preliminary student questionnaire was administered to students by the researcher during their English lessons in their classrooms. The English teachers were present on the site (see ethical consideration for details on teachers' presence). The researcher explained to the students (in low and high-performing schools) in Tamil the purpose of the questionnaire, their anonymity in participation and their freedom to refrain from doing the questionnaire. When requested he also provided the students with explanations or clarifications about

the questionnaire questions. In order to maximise students' participation, the Tamil version of the questionnaire was distributed to low-performing school students. The high-performing school students had the option of completing either the English or the Tamil version of the questionnaire owing to their fluency in both languages.

b) Teacher questionnaire

The preliminary teachers' questionnaire was given to each teacher in person by the researcher. Some teachers went through the questionnaire as they received them, asked for necessary clarifications concerning the content and completed the questionnaires. The other teachers were provided with the telephone contact of the researcher to contact him if they needed any clarifications. A few teachers were provided with necessary clarifications (section 2.23/table 2.9/appendix-2).

c) Lesson observations

Regarding the lesson observation, the role of the researcher was 'the complete observer' (Cohen et al. *ibid.*: 457) who was detached from the group and only observed the lesson. The researcher sat at the back of the classroom and observed the lesson by taking down notes and ticking off relevant checklists. Each lesson lasted forty minutes. Before the first observation the teacher explained to the students in Tamil the purpose of the research and the presence of the researcher in the classroom.

The researcher, as a complete observer had the benefit of observing the lessons in their natural settings. Bell (2005) observes that observations cannot be entirely unbiased because 'observations depend on the way people perceive what is being said or done' (p. 184) and this can affect both researcher and the participants' behaviour. In addition, it allowed the researcher to crosscheck the already obtained data through the teacher and the student questionnaires. However, the presence of the researcher in the classrooms had some effects on the lesson observations. An important effect of the researcher in the classroom was the influence of his presence on the behaviour of the students. The teachers commented that the students were quieter than usual and well behaved during the lessons because of the presence of the researcher. Though the lessons observation

was conducted in order to observe classroom situations in their natural settings the presence of the researcher was also likely to affect the behaviour of the teachers to some extent as they might have intended to give a better impression of their lessons to the researcher. When the lessons were observed on consecutive days, the researcher observed (on three occasions) that the teachers chose different activities for teaching instead of continuing the unfinished work of the previous day. According to the teaching experience of the researcher they chose activities with which they could feel more confident, for example explaining grammar items and doing exercises on them.

The researcher had opportunities to speak to the respective teacher for five to ten minutes after each lesson observation to clarify some observations the researcher had noted down during the lesson, but was unsure of. The teachers were happy to clarify things but unable to spend a lot of time as they had to move onto the next lesson.

d) Interviews

Interviews with principals, retired teachers of English and resource personnel took place towards the end of the preliminary study between October 2012 and December 2012. All the interviews were face-to-face and were recorded with an audio recording device with the consent of the interviewees. Each interview lasted from twenty to thirty minutes, depending on the available time each participant had.

The researcher interviewed four principals in their school office and they spoke in Tamil. The fifth principal was interviewed in his private residence which allowed for a quieter interview situation than the school, and the particular principal was able to speak English and hence used both English and Tamil to convey his responses. It was the same quiet experience with the retired teachers as they were interviewed in their private residence. The resource personnel were interviewed in their respective offices in the Department of Education. The retired teachers and resource persons spoke both in English and Tamil. They were confident and fluent in responding in English except one resource person who used more Tamil

than English. Though they were fluent in English, the researcher found that they were more elaborative whenever they switched into Tamil.

5.3.4 The main study

The main study research took place in Jaffna from August 2013 to December 2013. The research instruments (teacher questionnaires and interviews) for the main study were designed on the basis of the information gained in the preliminary study. A semi-structured interview was conducted with volunteer teachers who completed the main study questionnaire.

5.3.4.1 Main study research Instruments

a) Questionnaire

Purpose, construction and content of the teachers' questionnaire

The main study teacher questionnaire was designed to investigate the central problem of the current research i.e. how various classroom problems and challenges in English language teaching affected the teaching efficacy of the teachers of English. The participants were informed in the introduction of the questionnaire about the aspects of effective teaching of English according to the principals, resource personnel and retired teachers of English.

Based on the data obtained in the preliminary study, the researcher formed the main questionnaire for the teachers. The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section consisted of eight questions on the personal details of teachers. This section consisted of questions with Yes or No options and multiple choices, and questions which required written answers. The second section included ten questions which asked the participants for information on their teaching context. The types of questions in this section were the same as in section one. The final section which was the central part of the questionnaire was formed of seven questions. These seven questions inquired of the participants through Yes or No answers whether it was or was not difficult for them to be effective in teaching of English in relation to the five aspects of effective teaching of English identified by the principals, resource personnel and retired teachers of English in the preliminary study. In addition to that, each one of those seven questions provided

the participants with many positive and negative statements to choose as reasons according to the answers they gave to the main questions i.e., Yes or No. These positive and negative statements were presented to participants in a five point Likert scale method to report the degree of their agreement or disagreement. *Table 15* presents the first question in section III of the questionnaire as an example to demonstrate how teachers were asked to answer those questions.

Table 15. Example of question in main study teacher questionnaire (Question One)

1. Is it difficult for you to prepare your lessons every day? Yes () No (), because	1 Strongly agree	2 Agree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Disagree	5 Strongly disagree
I don't have enough time due to my family commitments					
I generally have lots of students' work to mark					
I teach many classes (e.g. grades 6, 8, 10 and 11)					
Sometimes I need to do non-teaching tasks given by the school administration					
<i>I don't need much time as I am familiar with the lessons</i>					
<i>I teach only a few classes</i>					
<i>I have got enough time to do my lesson preparation</i>					
<i>I don't need much time as students are in good standard of English</i>					
If you have more appropriate reason(s) or any comments, please state here briefly:					

As shown above the statements were divided into two sets. The first set of statements are given in non-italics and left aligned and those in the second set are given in italics and intended. Instructions were designed to help the respondents. They were instructed in the questionnaire that if they opted **Yes** to the main question they could select the appropriate statements from the first set i.e., the

non-italic and left aligned set of statements. If they opted *No*, to the main question they could select the appropriate statements from the second set i.e., the italic and intended set of statements. The teachers were instructed to complete the questionnaire in this way in order to avoid unnecessary confusion, because the first set of statements (non-italics and left-aligned) were formed in a way that the participants would find them sensible if they opted **Yes** to the main question. In the same way the second set of statements (italics and intended) were formed in a way that the participants would find them sensible if they opted **No** to the main question. If the participants opted **Yes** to the main question and searched for appropriate statements in the second set of statements, it was believed that they would not find them sensible. For example, one of the statements from the second set *'I teach only a few classes'* does not make any sense to a participant who selects **Yes** to the question **Is it difficult for you to prepare your lessons every day?** In this case the participant has to make an effort to make the statement (i.e., I teach only a few classes) sensible by selecting the Likert options either the **Disagree or Strongly disagree**. The researcher foresaw that structuring the statements and Likert responses in this way would create unnecessary confusion and become time-consuming on the part of the participants and also make the analysis more tedious. Hence, the participants were instructed to concentrate primarily on the set of statements according to the option they selected in the main question i.e, Yes or No.

However, the participants were encouraged to go through the statements in the set other than what they would select and make comments in the space given at the end if they found any statements were appropriate to their teaching context. For example, a high-performing school teacher who would tick 'Yes' to the above question (i.e., Is it difficult for you to prepare your lesson every day?) may agree with three out of the four statements. For example, a female teacher may disagree with the statement i.e., 'I teach many classes', but find the statement in the other set i.e., *I teach only few classes* relevant to her teaching context and she might add a comment that though she teaches few classes, each class consists of more than forty students and consequently she has lots of students' work to mark at home which in turn affects her daily lesson preparation. It was expected that the

additional participant comments at the end of the questionnaire would provide qualitative data to study the research problem in a more in-depth manner.

Piloting of the questionnaire

The month of June 2013 was spent piloting the teachers' questionnaire. The researcher e-mailed the questionnaire to five teachers from high-performing and five from low-performing schools (section 2.21/table 2.7/appendix-2) who had already participated in the preliminary study. They completed the questionnaires and returned them with some suggestions and requested clarifications (section 2.22/table 2.8/appendix-2) which were considered by the researcher in the revised questionnaire (section 2.13/appendix-2). *Table 16* shows questions in the revised teacher questionnaire designed to achieve the objectives of the main study.

Table 16. Revised questions of teacher questionnaire

Objectives of the questions	Questions of the teacher questionnaire
<u>Section I</u> Personal details of teachers	Questions from 1 to 8*
<u>Section II</u> Teaching contexts of teachers	Questions from 1 to 10*
<u>Section III</u> Aspects of effective teaching of English and the problems which affect them Daily lesson preparation:	1. Is it difficult for you to spend time to prepare your lessons daily? *
Conducting creative lessons:	2. Is it difficult for you to deliver interesting lessons to your students in the classroom? *
Autonomy in teaching:	3. Is it challenging for you to teach your students what they really need to learn? *

	4. Do you generally teach your students only what the curriculum expects of you? *
Self-development of teachers:	5. It is difficult for you to spend time to develop your personal knowledge of English? * 6. Do you find it difficult to take efforts to develop your pedagogical knowledge? *
Co-operating with administrative issues:	7. Is it difficult for you to co-operate with the regulations of the school administration? *

*See Appendix-2 (section 2.13) for the various problems related to each question

b) Interviews

A semi-structured interview (section 2.16/appendix-2) was conducted in the main study. The interview questions were based on the five aspects of effective teaching of English which were identified by the principals, resource personnel and retired teachers of English in the preliminary study and informed by the literature review. Therefore, the main study interview questions were not piloted.

The purpose of the interview was to have an in-depth understanding as to how the various problems which were identified by teachers in the main study questionnaire affected their English teaching efficacy.

As said earlier, the criteria of effective language teaching were identified according to the views of principals, retired teachers and resource personnel of English language teaching. As the views of the current teachers were not included, at the end of the interview sessions of the main study interviews each of the interviewees was asked to give views on their personal experiences of effectively teaching English in the classroom.

5.3.4.2 Main study Sample

a) Sampling strategy

A convenience sampling strategy was used in the main study. This was partly informed by the involvement of a senior English teacher, colleague (see Data

collection/p. 196) of the researcher who helped him in accessing and distributing the questionnaire to eighty-seven teachers who volunteered to participate from forty-two schools in three educational zones, A, B and C (see Number/pp. 177-178). The teachers were accessed according to teacher availability and school access opportunities. Though schools were accessed according to availability, the researcher had instructed his colleague to keep a possible balance by distributing the questionnaires in proportion to the number of schools in each educational zone. In addition the researcher accessed ten teachers via e-mail from six schools. In total, ninety-seven teachers were accessed in forty-eight schools.

The sampling strategy for selecting the participants for interview also was an opportunity sampling as the questionnaire participants were asked to volunteer to participate in the interview.

b) Research method, participants and their number according to educational zones

i. Questionnaire

Out of ninety-seven questionnaires which were distributed among forty-eight schools, sixty-eight questionnaires were received from thirty-nine schools. Six questionnaires were not valid and thus sixty-two questionnaires from thirty-five schools were usable. The thirty-five schools (twenty-five low-performing and ten high-performing schools) and the sixty-two teachers who participated in the main study through the questionnaire represented three educational zones in the district of Jaffna. *Table 17* displays the number of schools and teachers represented by the educational zones.

Table 17. Sample of questionnaire participants according to zones

	Edu. Zone A	Edu. Zone B	Edu. Zone C	Total
Schools	13	12	10	35
Types of Schools	1AB (N, P) 1C & Type II	1AB (N, P) 1C & Type II	1AB (P) 1C & Type II	
Teachers	27	18	17	62
Grades of Teachers	6 – 11	6 - 11	6 – 11	

ii. Semi-structured interview

Twenty out of sixty-two teachers who participated in the questionnaire volunteered to participate in a semi-structured interview. Twenty-nine participants had provided their contact numbers in their completed questionnaires to be contacted by the researcher for the interview. However, the researcher was only able to contact twenty-four of them; they were fifteen low-performing and nine high-performing school teachers. Three low-performing and one high-performing school teacher later found it difficult to allocate time for the interview due to personal circumstances. Thus twelve low-performing and eight high-performing school teachers finally participated in the interview sessions from October 2013 to December 2013. *Table 18* displays the number of interview participants and schools represented by the educational zones.

Table 18. Sample of interview participants according to zones

	Edu. Zone A	Edu. Zone B	Edu. Zone C	Total
Schools	7	5	4	16
Types of Schools	1AB (N, P) 1C & Type II	1AB (P) 1C & Type II	1C & Type II	
Teachers	11	5	4	20
Grades of Teachers	6 – 11	6 - 11	6 – 11	

Table 19 displays the number of participants and schools represented by educational zones through different research instruments.

Table 19. Summary of main study participants

		Edu. Zone A		Edu. Zone B		Edu. Zone C		Total
		LPS*	HPS**	LPS	HPS	LPS	HPS	
Questionnaire	Schools	9	4	9	3	7	3	35
	Teachers	15	12	10	8	12	5	62
Interview	Schools	5	2	3	2	2	2	16
	Teachers	7	4	3	2	2	2	20

*Low-performing schools

** High-performing schools

The sample displayed in *table 19* was a satisfactory representation of the sample as there were a reasonable ratio between the number of low and high-performing school teachers and schools. However, the study could have received more in-depth data from a wider circle of teachers if more teachers had volunteered to participate in the interview.

c) Participants and their number according to gender

Table 20 presents that twenty-nine female and eight male teachers in low-performing schools participated in the questionnaires and seven female and five male teachers out of them participated in the interviews. The teachers in high-performing schools who participated in the questionnaires were seventeen female and eight male teachers. Five female and three male teachers out of them participated in the interviews.

Table 20: Gender of the questionnaire and interview participants

	Teachers in low-performing schools		Teachers in high-performing schools	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Questionnaire	29	8	17	8
Interview	7	5	5	3

d) Participants and their number according to teacher qualifications

Table 21 shows that the qualification of the questionnaire and the interview participants comes under three categories: the diploma holders from the National Colleges of Education (NCOE), the certificate holders from Teacher Training Colleges (TTC) and the teachers with no qualification. According to the table, in the low-performing schools five teachers from the NCOE and seventeen teachers from TTC participated in the questionnaire. Of them two teachers from NCOE and eight teachers from TTC participated in the interviews. Fifteen questionnaire participants in low-performing schools were non-qualified teachers and two of them participated in the interviews. With regard to the teachers in high-

performing schools ten teachers from the NCOE and thirteen teachers from TTC participated in the questionnaire. Of them four teachers from NCOE and three teachers from TTC participated in the interviews. Two questionnaire participants in high-performing schools were non-qualified teachers and one of them participated in an interview.

Table 21: Teaching institutions and teaching qualifications of the questionnaire and interview participants

	Teachers in low-performing schools			Teachers in high-performing schools		
Institution teaching qualification gained from	NCOE	TTC	No teaching qualification	NCOE	TTC	No teaching qualification
Questionnaire	5	17	15	10	13	2
Interview	2	8	2	4	3	1

e) Participants and their number according to length of time in profession

Tables 22 and 23 present the length of time in the profession of the teachers in low and the high-performing schools respectively in three groups: up to five years, from six to fifteen years and above fifteen years. A Sri Lankan study on English language teacher development by Samaraweera (2011) considered the first five years of teaching as a period of professional stabilization. Hence the teachers with up to five years of teaching experience were grouped together in the current study. The teachers with six to fifteen years of teaching experience were grouped together as the number of teachers in this category of both groups of teachers (low and high-performing schools) was considerably high to obtain a stronger comparison. The rest of the teachers were grouped into the third category i.e., above fifteen years.

Table 22: Length of time in the profession of the questionnaire and interview participants

Teachers' length of time in the profession - Low-performing schools			
	0-5 years	6-15 years	Above 15 years
Questionnaire	19	14	4
Interview	3	5	4

According to *table 22* in the low-performing schools, nineteen teachers with below five years of teaching and fourteen teachers with between six and fifteen years of teaching participated in the questionnaire. Four teachers above fifteen years of teaching participated both in the questionnaire and the interview. Three out of nineteen teachers below five years of teaching and five out of fourteen teachers with between six and fifteen years of teaching participated in the interview.

Table 23: Length of time in the profession of the questionnaire and interview participants

Teachers' length of time in profession - High-performing schools			
	0-5 years	6-15 years	Above 15years
Questionnaire	2	15	8
Interview	-	6	2

According to *table 23* in the high-performing schools, two teachers had below five years of teaching, fifteen teachers had between six and fifteen years of teaching and eight teachers with above fifteen years of teaching participated in the questionnaire. Of them, six teachers with between six and fifteen years of teaching and two teachers above fifteen years of teaching participated in the interview.

f) Participants and their number according to their age group

Tables 24 and 25 present the age of the teachers under three groups: from twenty-five to thirty-five, from thirty-five to fifty and above fifty. In the questionnaire the teachers were asked to report their age within five years and consequently there were six age groups covering ages from twenty-five to above fifty. As a result the participants were scattered and certain groups had three or four participants only. In order to have more participants in each group and thereby obtain stronger comparison among the groups, the participants were divided into three age groups as shown in table 24 and 25. However, it was not avoidable that certain groups (for example the group ‘above 50’) had few participants from both groups of teachers.

Table 24: Age group of the questionnaire and interview participants

Teachers’ age group - Low-performing schools			
	25-35 years	36-50 years	Above 50 years
Questionnaire	23	11	3
Interview	3	6	3

Table 24 shows that in low-performing schools, twenty-three teachers aged between twenty-five and thirty-five years of age participated in the questionnaire and three of them participated in the interview. Eleven teachers between thirty-six and fifty years of age participated in the questionnaire and six of them participated in the interview. Three teachers above fifty years of age participated both in the questionnaire and the interview.

Table 25: Age group of the questionnaire and interview participants

Teachers’ age group - High-performing schools			
	25-35	36-50	Above 50
Questionnaire	10	10	5
Interview	-	6	2

According to *table 25* in high-performing schools, ten teachers between twenty-five and thirty-five years of age participated in the questionnaire. Ten teachers between thirty-six and fifty years of age participated in the questionnaire and six of them participated in the interview. Five teachers who were above fifty years of age participated in the questionnaire and two of them participated in the interview.

5.3.4.3 Main study data collection

The researcher was not present in Jaffna during the main study due to lack of financial resources for returning to Sri Lanka from England to conduct the research. Following discussions with the researcher's supervisors an alternative strategy was sought. It was decided that the most conducive way to collect the data was to enlist the help of a local teacher in Jaffna. Thus a senior English teacher who was a former colleague of the researcher helped in distributing and collecting the teacher questionnaires on behalf of the researcher. It is not unusual for researchers to rely on a third party in a school to distribute questionnaires (Cohen et al., 2011). The researcher had sufficiently instructed his former colleague via a telephone conversation on the purpose and content of the questionnaire so that he could clarify any doubts from the participants. The researcher was assured that he had instructed his colleague sufficiently as the questionnaire participants, when they participated in the interviews later, did not raise any concerns or issues about understanding the questionnaire.

Teachers from three educational zones participated in the questionnaire. In order to identify from which educational zone and which category of school (high or low-performing school) a completed questionnaire was received, the questionnaire was marked with a code when it had been distributed to a respective teacher. The code also helped to identify if two or more questionnaires were received from the same school.

In order to maximise the response rate of the teachers' questionnaires, a few of the strategies suggested by Hudson and Miller (1997 in Cohen et al., *ibid*) were followed such as: using stamped addressed envelopes and making explicit reference to issues of confidentiality and anonymity (5.3.5.4). The length of the questionnaire was also considered so that teachers would be encouraged to find

time in the midst of their heavy schedules to complete it. In order to encourage participation in a teacher interview, an invitation to a follow-up interview was offered in the questionnaire. The completed questionnaires were placed in the stamped addressed envelope provided and returned by the participants to the colleague of the researcher by post, and later they were redirected to the researcher.

Since the researcher was not in Sri Lanka the main study interviews took place via telephone or Skype. The interviews lasted from forty minutes to one hour. Two teachers (from one low-performing and one high-performing school) participated via Skype and all the others were interviewed via telephone. They found it easier to be interviewed via telephone than Skype as the latter required computer and internet facilities. However, the interviews via Skype were more effective than the telephone interviews as the researcher was able to see the face of the interviewees which gave him access to non-verbal information from the participants. The non-verbal information such as the facial expression and the body language of the teacher helped the researcher to ascertain the trustworthiness of what they reported. Further the visual contacts of the researcher and interviewees in Skype developed a rapport and confidentiality between them (discussed in section 5.3.6.3). The non-verbal information was not available in the telephone interviews. However, the telephone interviews were found to be more stable than the Skype interviews as the internet connection was interrupted often during the Skype interviews. Hence, the telephone interviews were conducted with fewer interruptions than the Skype interviews.

The telephone and the Skype interviews were recorded by an audio device in English or Tamil. However, most of the participants spoke in Tamil in their interview. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and the information gathered in Tamil was translated into English (to assist data analysis) by the researcher himself.

5.3.5 Ethical considerations

The study complied with the ethical expectations as set out by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011) and the University of Bedfordshire.

5.3.5.1 Approval of the research ethics scrutiny panel

The researcher, on the 25th January 2012 reported to the Research Ethics Scrutiny Panel of the University of Bedfordshire the ethical issues related to the research since it involved human participants. The researcher submitted the necessary project information sheets and consent forms (sections 2.1 to 2.15/appendix-2) for students, parents of the students, teachers, principals and educational personnel. Ethical approval for the study was granted by the University and all the participant groups consented to be involved (section 3.1/appendix-3).

5.3.5.2 Approval to access schools and teachers

In order to access classrooms for lesson observation the researcher obtained the necessary written approval (section 3.2/appendix-3) from the respective zonal Department of Education. To access other schools to approach teachers and principals to distribute the teacher questionnaires and interview them, the researcher was instructed by the relevant zonal authority that verbal consent from principals to contact their respective teaching staff was sufficient. This was observed by the researcher and the principals granted permission to access their staff.

5.3.5.3 Issues of consent

In the preliminary study, with regard to getting the consent of the parents for their children to participate in the questionnaire and lesson observations, the parents were given a simplified translated consent form (i.e. it was translated from English into Tamil). The parents were informed that they were totally free to instruct their children not to participate in the study if they did not wish to. Further, when the questionnaires were distributed to the students, the researcher in the presence of the teacher clearly explained in Tamil that they were totally free to refrain from answering any questions especially those about their parents' educational and

professional qualification, or a part of or the whole questionnaire, and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Most importantly they were instructed by the researcher not to reveal their identity in the questionnaire. This was also ensured as the questionnaires were coded by numbers. The students were assured that the completed questionnaires would be collected by the researcher himself and that their answers would not be discussed with their English lesson teachers. The researcher had requested the teachers beforehand to keep themselves away from students while they were answering the questionnaire so that they could answer without any reluctance or fear.

Regarding the lesson observations, necessary permissions were obtained from the principals of the respective schools and the teachers of the observed classes gave their consent for their lessons to be observed. The researcher from his teaching experience knew that teachers had a tendency to change their normal teaching style if they already knew that their lesson would be observed by someone. Thus he explained this to the teachers beforehand and expressed his wish that he would prefer to visit the classroom without prior notice to get a more genuine situation of the teaching and learning activities and they agreed.

To conduct interviews with principals, resource personnel and retired teachers during the preliminary study, necessary information sheets and consent forms were given to them when the researcher met them to arrange a time and venue for the interview. Since the researcher was not present in the research context during the main study the information sheets and consent forms for the teachers were given along with the questionnaire by the colleague who deputised for the researcher. In addition to the questionnaire consent request, the research information sheets informed the questionnaire participants that providing their contact details in response to a question asking them to do so if they wished to participate in a follow-up interview would be taken as implied consent to participate in the interview. They were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

5.3.5.4 Issues of confidentiality and anonymity

The participants in the preliminary study were assured of confidentiality as there was no third person or proxy involved. However, there were some concerns with regard to the questionnaire participants of the main study since their questionnaires were distributed and collected by a former colleague of the researcher. In order to assure confidentiality in this exceptional case, each teacher was issued with a stamped self-addressed envelope by the researcher's colleague so that they could return the completed questionnaire by post. The researcher instructed his colleague to collect all the completed questionnaires in their sealed condition and return them to him. Anonymity was observed as the participants were requested not to reveal their identity in the questionnaire or on the envelope. However, the researcher had to take further measures in order for the questionnaire data not to be accessed by his colleague while he handled the questionnaire; the researcher explained to him the protocol of the ethics involved in the current research and the necessity to abide with it in order for the research to be valid. To the best of the researcher's knowledge his colleague fully abided with all the ethical issues of the research.

Confidentiality of the information given by all of interviewees was assured as they were interviewed only by the researcher. The personal data of participants who were interviewed and their transcripts were anonymised with their names changed into codes such as LPS-1, HPS-5 etc. (i.e., low-performing or high-performing school). The personal data of the interview participants and other data collected from them were stored electronically and secured in the personal computer of the researcher in password protected files, only accessible by the researcher. The ethical compliance adopted by the researcher served to ensure that no participants in the preliminary or main study were placed under any form of physical or mental stress.

5.3.6 Issues of reliability/validity/trustworthiness of data

The reliability of the data and findings is one of the primary requirements in any research study. According to Nunan (1999 in Zohrabi, 2013) the reliability deals with the consistency, dependability and replicability of the results obtained from a

study. Cohen et al (ibid.) who have identified twenty different types of validity contend that validity relates to different research paradigms, the integrity of the investigation and is therefore not just dependent on the data collected. They note:

Whilst earlier versions of validity were based on the view that it is essentially a demonstration that a particular instrument in fact measures what it purports to measure, or that an account accurately represents 'those features that it is intended to describe, explain or theorise' (Winter 2000:1), more recently validity has taken many forms. For example, in qualitative data, validity might be addressed through honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher (pp. 179).

According to Punch (2005) 'validity refers to the 'truthfulness', 'correct-ness' or accuracy of research data. If results are considered accurate then the research instrument must measure what we claim it is to measure. Thus an indicator is valid to the extent that it empirically represents the concept it purports to measure' (Punch 2005: 100). The issues of reliability and validity which are common in quantitative research are now also considered in qualitative research (Golafshani, 2003). Since the current study employed a mixed method research approach, this section explains how the issues of reliability or validity were addressed in each research instrument.

5.3.6.1 Reliability in questionnaires

LeCompte and Preissle (1993 in Cohen et al., ibid), regarding the reliability of quantitative research instruments say that they should produce consistent results if the same methods are used with the same sample. The students who participated in the questionnaires in the preliminary study received their questionnaire directly from the researcher and completed them while the researcher was on the site. They were given sufficient time and explanations where requested to help them to answer the questions. All the student participants were given the questionnaires during their English lesson in their classroom and hence all the participants were placed under the same conditions to obtain a reliable output from the research instrument.

The questionnaires for teachers in the preliminary study were also distributed and collected back directly by the researcher. Most of the teachers completed the questionnaires as soon as they received them and returned them to the researcher and the rest were collected by the researcher at a convenient time for each teacher. The questionnaires for the teachers in the main study, as outlined in the '*Data collection*' section (5.3.4.3), were distributed by a senior colleague with prior arrangement by the researcher. To make sure that all questionnaire participants received sufficient and the same information about the purpose of the research, the researcher attached a detailed information sheet with the questionnaire. The information sheet not only contained information about the purpose of the research and instructions for completing the questionnaire, but also sufficient explanations about certain concepts included in the questionnaire about which the few teachers who participated in piloting of the questionnaire raised concerns. Further, the researcher fully instructed his senior colleague in case the participants contacted him for any clarification on the questionnaire. No teachers sought additional clarifications.

5.3.6.2 Reliability in lesson observation

Cohen et al. (ibid.) discussed two kinds of validity or reliability in observation-based research: external and internal validity. With regard to external validity some basic questions need to be asked about how the researcher knows that the results of a particular piece of research are applicable to other situations or how he or she knows that the results of a particular piece of research represent the genuine product. It is suggested that the researcher could address these questions by employing some techniques in selecting the sample 'as a way of checking on the representativeness of the events that they observe and of cross-checking their interpretations of the meanings of those events' (p. 209). A purposive sampling strategy was used to select the classrooms for the lesson observations (see p. 147). Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009 in Cohen et al., ibid.) in order to achieve 'representativeness or comparability' (p. 157) draw attention to six types of purposive sampling, one of which is typical case sampling. The researcher selected the typical case sampling which included the typical cases of the group to

represent the student populace. The typical case sampling means a sample becomes typical of the whole population when the sample possess most of the characteristics of the whole population. The classroom types such as 1AB, 1C and Type II involved in the current study (see Table 2 in Chapter Two). For example a sample of 1AB classrooms can be considered as a typical case sample of the whole 1AB classrooms population when the sample possess the characteristics of the whole population such as the excessive number of students, students with high learning ability, quiet learning environment etc. (Table 1.4/appendix-1). The external validity of the lesson observation was obtained by selecting the typical groups of students so that the results obtained from them could be applied to the same groups (1AB, 1C and Type II) of students elsewhere. Regarding the internal validity, the researcher took necessary measures to avoid the possible threats suggested by Cohen et al. (2007) as follows.

When the researcher observes the present situation in the classroom he (sic) may not be aware of important antecedent events: When the researcher could not understand the reason for certain behaviours of students and the teacher, he always took note of such events and had them clarified during the five to ten minutes informal talk with the teacher soon after the lesson observation.

Informants may not represent of the sample: This threat was avoided by employing the typical case sampling (outlined above) which assured that the groups of students represented the sample in the study.

The observer's presence might bring about different behaviours: To minimise the different behaviours of students, the researcher observed the lesson by sitting at the back of the classroom so that the students did not have direct visual contact with the researcher. However, this was not possible when the researcher observed lessons in the classrooms where students sat in groups. To reduce the different behaviours of the teachers, the researcher had obtained the consent of the teacher to visit the classroom without informing the teacher of the exact day or time of the visit.

The researcher might become too attached to the group: The researcher was not a participant observer in the current research and hence not attached to the groups he observed. This helped the researcher to obtain more objective information from the lesson observations.

5.3.6.3 Reliability in interviews

In order to achieve greater reliability in the interviews, the researcher followed the most practical way of minimising the amount of bias. The characteristics of the interviewer and the interviewees and the substantive content of the questions are possible sources of bias (Cohen et al., *ibid.*). In order to avoid the bias which could be caused by the characteristics of the researcher, he made himself aware of the fact that he should avoid the tendency to see the interviewee in his own image or seek answers that supported his preconceived notions (*ibid.*).

Regarding the bias that could be caused by the respondents, the researcher always made sure that they clearly understood the questions so that they would give relevant answers. To avoid misperceptions on the part of the interviewer of what the interviewees said, the researcher made every effort to clarify the issues when doubts arose. When the interviewees spoke in Tamil, the data was translated into English and the transcription of the translated text was sent to respective interviewees to check whether their views were translated correctly without any misperceptions or distortions or new information being added. Though the teachers had less communicative competency in English, which is important to deliver effective English lessons, their linguistic competency i.e., the knowledge about the English language (Paulston, 1992; Bagaric and Djigunovic, 2007) and ability to read in English was high enough to check the text translated from Tamil into English. Teachers had sufficient linguistic competency as they were able to read all the textbooks for the English subject and explain them to the students.

The researcher took the aforementioned measures to avoid bias and maintain reliability in both the face-to-face interviews which were conducted in the preliminary study and the main study interviews which were conducted via telephone and Skype. However, as Miller and Cannel (1997 in Cohen et al., *ibid.*:

206) say ‘the non-verbal paralinguistic cues’ of face-to-face interviews are absent in telephone interviews. This non-verbal mediation makes face-to-face interviewees feel supportive and confident in the course of the interview, but the absence of such non-verbal mediation in telephone interviews may turn the interviews into being ‘mechanical and cold’ (ibid.). Despite the absence of non-verbal mediation, the researcher found that the aspect of trust of the interviewees in the interviewer was much assured as fifteen out of the twenty main study interview participants were very well known to the researcher, from his prior role as a teacher in Sri Lanka. The trust established through prior familiarity and collaboration increased the aspect of confidentiality which in turn made the interviewees courageous to share their perspectives on certain delicate issues. For example as discussed in sections 7.4.3.3; 7.5.1 and 7.5.1.2 of Chapter Seven they spoke about the incompetence of the principals, inability to make decisions on irrelevant issues imposed by superior authorities, irresponsibility and the lack of co-operation of the authorities at the Department of Education and of the principals in the schools.

5.3.6.4 Insider researcher

The researcher’s position as an ‘insider’ researcher in this study requires some discussion. Reference to being an insider researcher is usually confined to staff who conduct research in the institution in which they work (Cohen et al., 2007). Although the researcher was not employed in the schools where the research was conducted, he was nevertheless viewed as an ‘insider’ by many of the education participants who took part in the study (students, but particularly teachers, principals and other educational personnel). This is because before undertaking this research the researcher was a Sri Lankan teacher of English in Jaffna where this research was conducted. He not only worked in Jaffna but was born and bred there and thus had a very extended and deep familiarity with the educational, socio-economic, cultural and political aspects of the research context. The perceived status of the researcher as an ‘insider’ researcher had a positive impact on certain issues of the research process such as accessing schools, participants and collecting data from them etc.

Smyth and Holian, (2008 in Unluer, 2012) say that insider-researchers generally know the politics of the institution, that is to say how the hierarchy works and how to approach the people concerned. The researcher was a former teacher as well as administrative personnel in one of the leading Catholic schools in the district of Jaffna. This made him acquainted with many principals, teachers and educational authorities and as a result of this getting approval from the authorities of the Department of Education to access schools, students and teachers was quite easy for the researcher.

Greater understanding of the culture being studied, natural flow of social interactions and the reliability of information shared because of intimacy between the researcher and the participants are important advantages of being an insider-researcher (Bonner and Tolhurst, 2002). During the lesson observations, the researcher found his background in terms of sharing the same language, culture, and ethnicity of the students and teachers were helpful to interpret their behaviours, cultural mannerisms and conversations in Tamil (where these occurred).

Though the researcher is fluent in Tamil, the research instruments were written in English as he is studying in an English university. Regarding the data collection however, in order to help the students (especially those in the low-performing schools) to understand the questionnaire fully the researcher used his ability to translate the questionnaire into Tamil and used them for the data collection.

Regarding the interviews, the researcher realised that the participants became more receptive and confident when he conversed with them in Tamil. The aspect of the natural flow of social interaction which Bonner and Tolhurst (ibid.) speak of was obvious when the researcher and the participants used Tamil. Even senior teachers who could converse in English fluently seemed to be more comfortable and informative when the researcher used Tamil. Most of the teachers, resource personnel and retired teachers who participated in the interviews used both English and Tamil. Even though it was an onerous task for the researcher to translate the participants' information from Tamil into English before transcribing he found that participants were more descriptive and elaborative when they used

Tamil. To ensure accuracy of the translated interview contents, the interviewees were asked to check the translation via email.

The data gathering process was less likely to be affected by the differences between the researcher and the participants on the basis of social class, ethnicity, educational qualifications and gender as the researcher was previously familiar to most of the participants among teachers, principals, retired teachers and the resource personnel from his former role as a teacher in Sri Lanka (as explained above). The researcher found that such familiarity helped both sides to establish a rapport which in turn encouraged the participants to be more forthcoming in their interviews. However, there was less familiarity with the student participants as the researcher was not known to all the students. This may have contributed to the presence of the researcher affecting the behaviour of some of the students during the lesson observations as discussed above.

5.3.6.5 Reflexivity

According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1983 in Cohen et al. Ibid) reflexivity recognises that researchers are not separable from the context they are studying. Researchers have their own ideas, values, bias and opinions and through these they look at the world and interpret it. Steedman (1991 in Inckle, 2005) says that reflexivity entails that the researcher is aware of his/her effect on the process and outcome of the research. Similarly, Cohen et al. (2007) maintain that researchers should acknowledge and reveal their own selves in the research so that they can understand what part they play in or how they influence the research.

In the current research the researcher was aware that he needed to be highly reflexive as he was investigating the educational context of Jaffna which was very well related to him by virtue of his former career as a teacher. In order to avoid preconceived perceptions and to be more bias free, the researcher made sure that the data was interpreted as the participants viewed them and not as he viewed them by always checking the connection between the interpretation made by the researcher and the views of the participants. Reflecting on his background and prior experiences in Sri Lanka also helped the researcher to understand and avoid possible biased data collection and data analysis caused by the familiarity of the

researcher with some of the participants and research contexts. DeLyser (2001) and Hewitt-Taylor (2002) in Unluer (ibid.) warn that a greater familiarity between the researcher and the participants can lead to a loss of objectivity as the researcher can make the wrong assumptions based on his/her prior knowledge about the information given by the participants. During the lesson observations in the preliminary study the researcher observed that much of the behaviour of the students and teachers could be interpreted against his own teaching experience of the past. However, the researcher took efforts to clarify his interpretation with the teachers during the informal talks after each lesson observation. The researcher was also able to cross check with the teachers when he encountered the same situations in different classrooms. Since the researcher was a non-participant observer, he was able to view the behaviour of the participants objectively. However, the researcher was aware that his preconceived knowledge about the world of students and teachers in Jaffna could have influenced his perceptions of the student and teacher behaviours he observed. He was also aware that his preconceived perceptions could be easily challenged because of the fast changing socio-economic and cultural phenomenon presented in Sri Lanka as a result of the end of the civil war. Therefore the researcher made use of available opportunities to learn from the informal conversations with teachers (especially after the lesson observations and other occasions that occurred during the data collection) and correct any misconceptions that he had. Being reflexive also enabled the researcher to recognise the ways in which his presence in the classroom affected both student and teacher behaviours in the preliminary study (see lesson observations above).

When the participants were giving information, the researcher asked for necessary explanations and clarification even on occasions where he felt able to interpret the information on the basis of his existing knowledge. When the researcher asked for some clarification on certain issues, he always avoided mentioning his own views about the same issues so that the participants were not influenced by the views of the researcher, and he asked for the same information from all participants even though he already had sufficient clarification. During the data analysis phase, the researcher read the texts several times and tried his best to

interpret the data in the light of the context of the participants. The researcher was able to get a more bias free contextual knowledge of the participants through the data collection field notes, the informal conversations with teachers and principals during the preliminary study and the educational news covered by the daily local newspapers which updated the knowledge of the researcher about the local context. This helped the researcher avoid the ‘taken-for-granted’ (Cohen et al., 2000: 25) meanings of what the participants uttered in the interviews and reveal the underlying realities of the issues shared by the participants.

5.3.7 Data analysis and interpretation

Many researchers consider that analysis of qualitative data is the most difficult part in a research study (Kohn, 1997). This is because while there are advanced software packages such as SPSS to analyse the quantitative data, the qualitative data analysis according to Cohen et al. (2011) often heavily relies on interpretations. They say, ‘There is no one single or correct way to analyse and present qualitative data; how one does it should abide by the issue of *fitness for purpose*’ (ibid. p. 461). In this research two approaches were taken in analysing both the preliminary and main study data. These are outlined below.

5.3.7.1 Quantitative data analysis

The current research analysed the quantitative data obtained through the students’ and teachers’ questionnaire in the preliminary and the main study, by using the descriptive statistical analysis of Excel software.

Descriptive statistics are used to describe the basic features of the data in a study. (...). (They) are used to present quantitative descriptions in a manageable form. In a research study we may have lots of measures. Or we may measure a large number of people on any measure. Descriptive statistics help us to simplify large amounts of data in a sensible way (Trochim, 2006: 1).

The Excel software allowed the questionnaire data to be described and presented in tables, bar charts and pie charts. In descriptive statistics a frequency distribution is commonly used to describe the quantitative responses of the participants (Trochim, ibid.). The frequency distribution of student responses in the preliminary study is displayed in tables and charts. Since the number of teachers who participated in the preliminary study through the questionnaire were

small, the frequency distribution of their responses is reported in text by using raw numbers. The frequency distribution of the main study teacher responses, which were obtained through the Likert scale method, is displayed in stacked bar charts using raw numbers.

5.3.7.2 Qualitative data analysis

The interview data in this study was analysed using the six steps analysis which is commonly used in analysing qualitative data. Creswell (2005) explains this six steps analysis through *Figure 3* below.

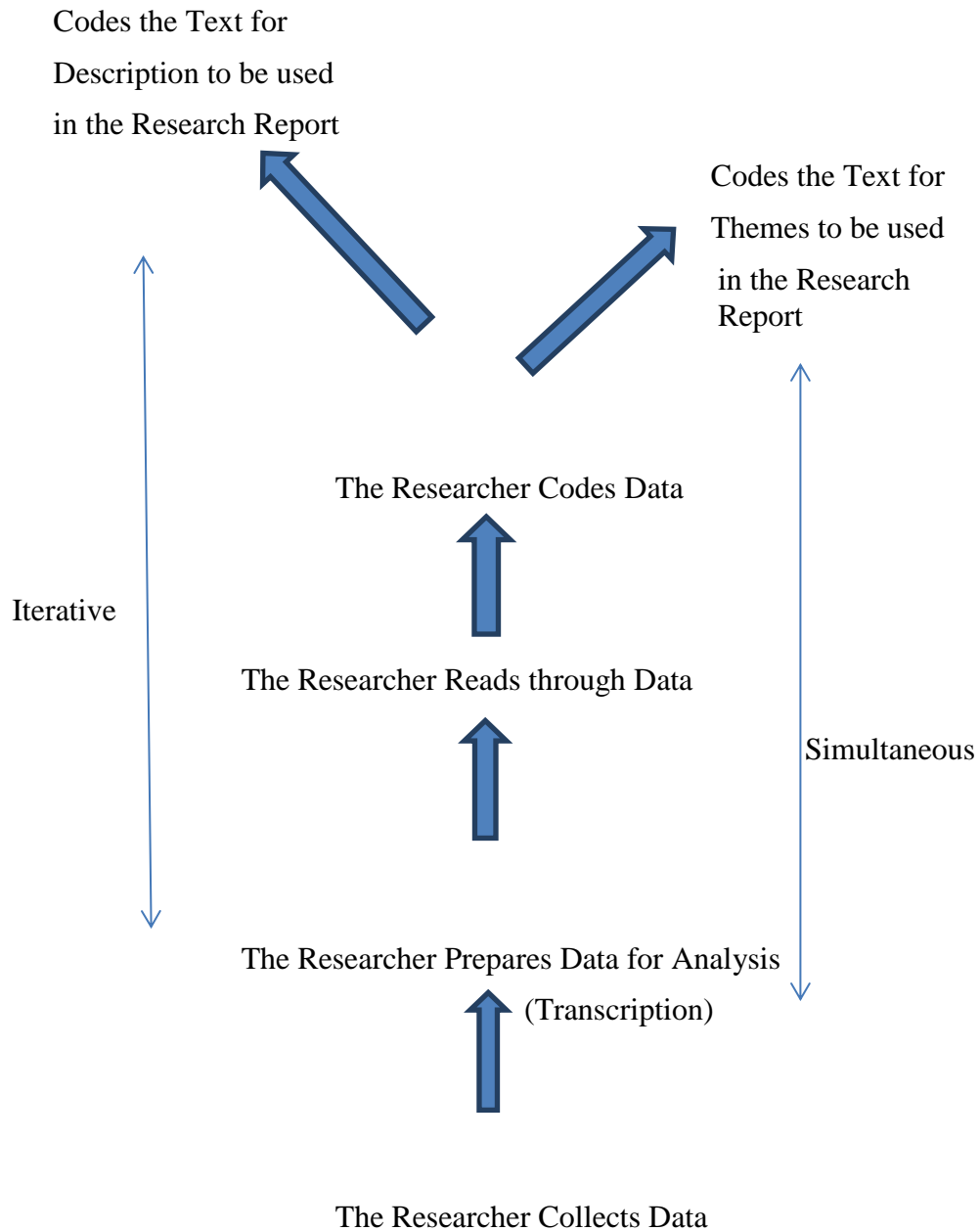


Figure 3. Stages of qualitative analysis

(Creswell, *ibid.*, p.231)

It is inductive in approach, going from particular data to general themes. According to Creswell (*ibid.*) two important aspects can be noted in this qualitative data analysis method: simultaneous and iterative. Traditionally in quantitative research, data is collected first and the analysis follows later. However, in qualitative research while data is being collected the researcher may analyse the information previously collected. During the period of the interviews,

after each interview the researcher listened to the recording of the interview to see whether there were any issues or information which might need more clarifications or could be enquired in more detail so that he could consider them in the following interviews. This qualitative method of data analysis is iterative. The researcher travelled back and forth between data collection and analysis to fill gaps in the information given by the participants (Folkestad, 2008).

The difficult part for the researcher in this six steps data analysis was coding the data and generating themes from those codes. Creswell (ibid.) presents a visual model of the coding process (*Figure 4*) in which the data is divided into text or image segments, then these segments are labelled with codes, then the codes are examined for overlap and redundancy and finally the remaining codes are collapsed into themes.

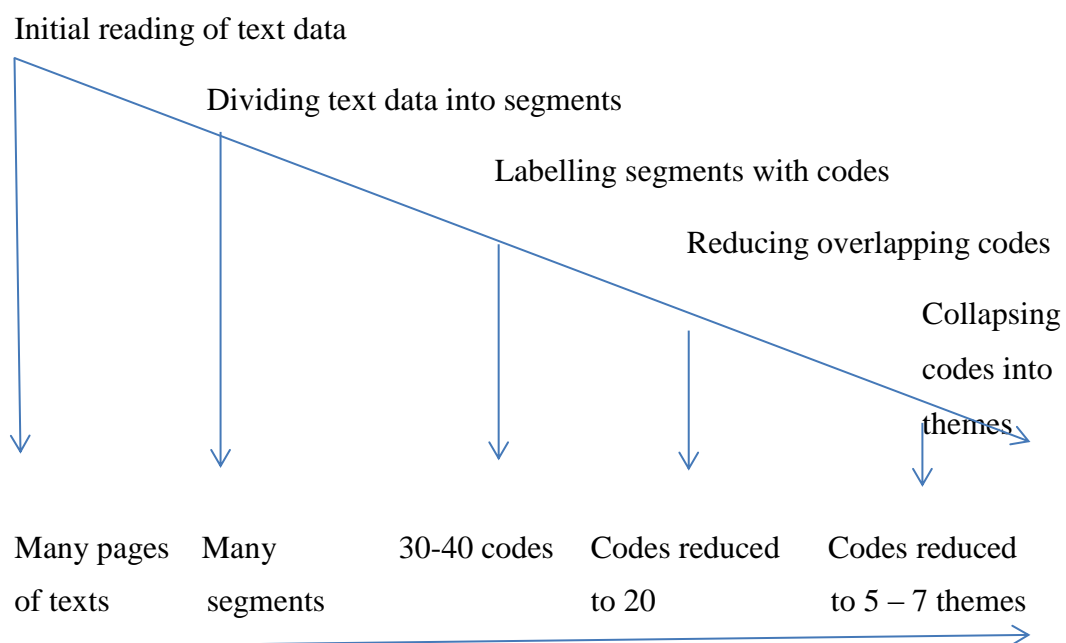


Figure 4. Visual process of qualitative analysis

(Modified from Creswell, *ibid.*, p. 238)

Cohen et al. (ibid.) explained in detail how a piece of text or segment could be coded. They quote Strauss and Corbin (1990) who explain that coding is a process which consists of breaking down segments of text data into smaller units, examining those units by comparing them with other units and finally

conceptualising and categorising them. The researcher followed this process by employing the open coding system as he found it easy to work with the interview data he collected. According to the open coding system, the researcher simply attached a label to a piece of text to describe that piece of text. The code name (label) given was derived either from the piece of text or from the researcher's creation as he decided that it suitably described the essence of the text. Then the codes were grouped into categories which were given different titles. Strauss and Corbin (1990 in Cohen at al., ibid) advise that the title to the category should be more abstract than the specific ideas or contents of the codes that come under the category. The researcher gave titles to categories on the basis of specific themes which could summarise the essence of the data denoted by the codes.

While the themes were reported in writing, the data under each theme were cross analysed with data obtained from the students' and teachers' questionnaire, lesson observations and interviews with principals, resource personnel and retired teachers of English. This helped the researcher to triangulate the data collected and present a more critical qualitative data analysis of the teachers' views on the various problems and challenges they faced with teaching the English language effectively.

Figure 5 in the next page presents a flowchart which visualises the overall research procedure which took place in the current study.

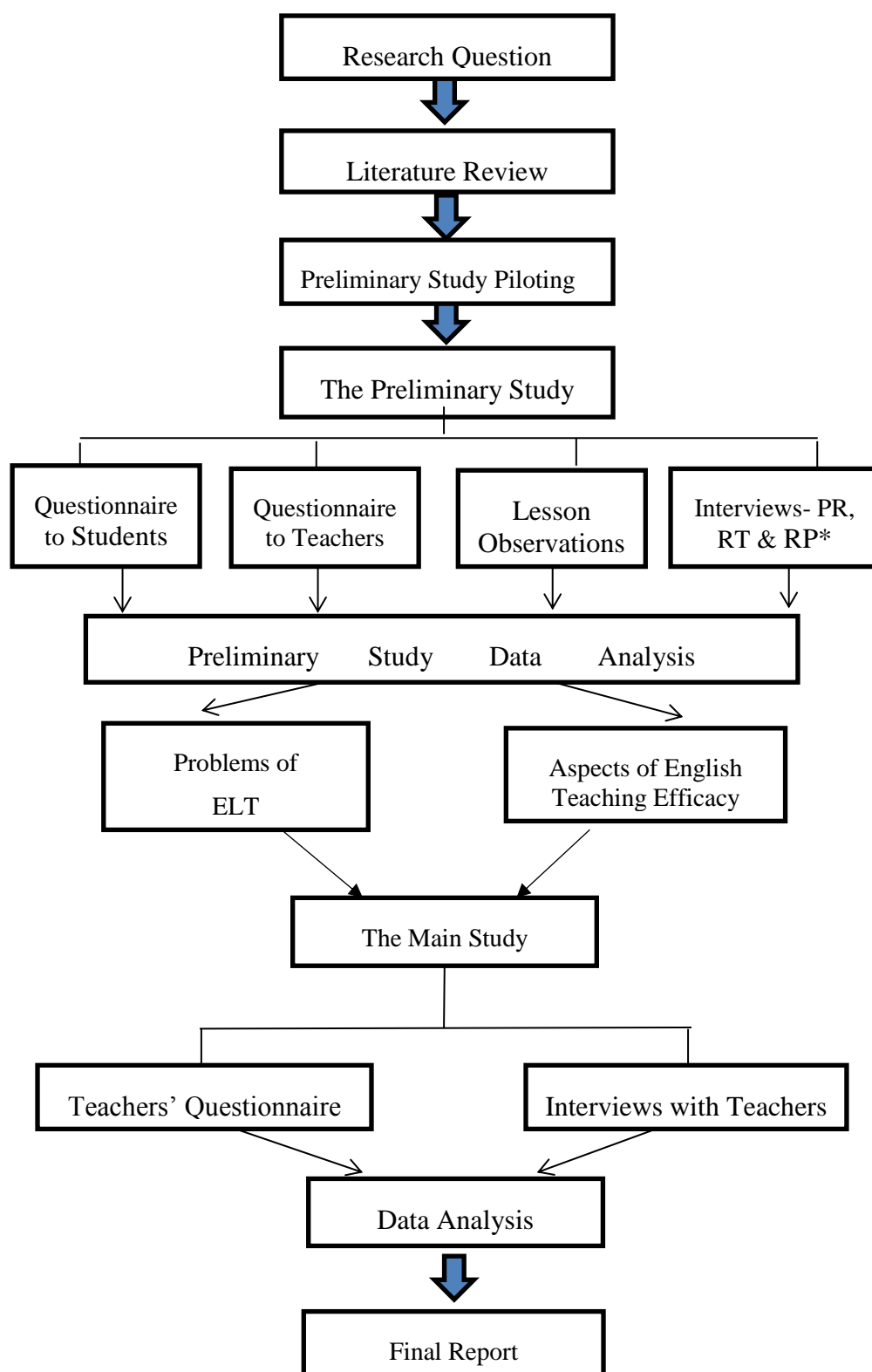


Figure 5. Overall process of the current research

*PR = Principals
RT = Retired Teachers

5.4 Chapter summary

This chapter explained the research method used in the current study. A mixed methods research approach was employed: the quantitative data were obtained through questionnaires and the qualitative data were obtained through interviews and lessons observation. The research was conducted in two stages, a preliminary study and a main study. The preliminary study was conducted to answer the sub-research question and to establish necessary operational definitions in order to conduct the main study. The research was conducted in selected secondary state schools in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. The central focus of the study was the overall English teaching of the local teachers particularly their classroom teaching. The sample of the current study included students, teachers of English, principals, resource personnel of English language teaching and retired teachers of English in Sri Lanka. The numeric data of the questionnaires were analysed and presented through charts and tables. The qualitative data were analysed through a thematic analysis as explained by Creswell (2005).

6. Data Presentation and Analysis of Preliminary Study

Introduction

This chapter has two parts and each part includes the following sections:

Part One

1. Students' questionnaire
2. Lesson observations

Part Two

3. Teachers' questionnaire
4. Interviews with principals, resource personnel of English language teaching and retired teachers of English
5. Discussion on sub-research question
6. Discussion on operational criteria for main study

Part One presents and analyses the data of relevant research instruments in relation to the sub-research question (Are the teachers whose students perform very well in English providing more effective teaching to their students than the teachers whose students underperform in English?). Sections 3 and 4 of Part Two present and analyse the data of relevant research instruments in order to obtain the operational criteria in relation to the main research question (How do various classroom and other related problems such as socio-economic and political issues which are **connected to the teachers' profession** affect the teaching efficacy of the teachers of English?). Sections 5 and 6 discuss the findings on the sub-research question and the operational criteria for the main study respectively.

Part One

6.1 Students' Questionnaires

As said in 5.3.3.1, the student questionnaire was primarily connected to the sub-research question that was to investigate whether there were substantial differences between the students in low and the high-performing schools in relation to the English language learning opportunities and experience.

Ultimately such differences in the learning experience between them were sought to know if the teachers in high-performing schools exercised more effective teaching than their counterparts. The data and the analysis of the student questionnaire, according to the different categories of information obtained from the data, are presented under the following three sub-sections:

1. Various opportunities that facilitated students' learning of English
2. Students' English learning experiences in the classroom
3. Students' expectations of their English teachers.

6.1.1 Various opportunities that facilitated students' learning of English

Various English learning opportunities to the students through their primary education, the socio-economic status and the educational background of their parents and the English day competitions in their schools are discussed here.

1. Primary education of students (Q – 2, 3 & 4)

	* LPSs	** HPSs
Learning English from Grade One	84	121
Learning English from Grade Three	67	26
Attending high-performing primary schools	14	113
Success in Grade Five Scholarship Examination	9	98

Table 26

*=low-performing schools

**=high-performing schools

According to **table 26** of those surveyed, more students in high-performing (121) than low-performing schools (eighty-four) had an opportunity to learn English from Grade One in which the activity based oral English (see 2.3.1.1) is implemented to lay a necessary foundation to students for the textbook based learning in Grade Three.

Attending high-performing primary schools and success in Grade Five Scholarship Examination (G5SE) are correlated (see 3.1.2). The researcher, through his educational contextual knowledge, identified the high-performing primary schools from the names of those schools mentioned by the students in the questionnaire. Accordingly, more students in high-performing (113) than low-performing schools (fourteen) had had their primary education in such high-performing primary schools which gave greater importance to prepare the students for the G5SE (see 3.1.2). According to the Sri Lankan government educational policy, students who pass the G5SE become eligible to be admitted in prestigious 1AB or National Schools for their secondary education (Liyanage, 2013). Consequently those students get more opportunities in these prestigious schools to learn English than their counterparts. This seems to be supported by the survey data which shows that more students in high-performing (ninety-eight) than low-performing schools (nine) got through the G5SE.

2. Socio-economic background of parents (Q – 5, 6 & 10)

	*LPSs	**HPSs
Students who reported their fathers' jobs of higher income in Sri Lankan contexts	25	86
Students who reported their mothers' jobs of higher income in Sri Lankan contexts	5	14
Students who attended tuition classes for English	51	109

Table 27

*=low-performing schools

**=high-performing schools

As part of trying to understand the students' socio-economic background, the students were asked to mention the jobs of their parents. **Table 27** displays, out of

the reported jobs (teaching, lecturing in the university, clerical jobs in the public sector, nursing, working in non-governmental agencies, doctors and working abroad and private business) the number of the parents whose jobs were found to be of a higher income in Sri Lankan contexts. Thus more students in high-performing (eighty-six) than low-performing schools (twenty-five) reported their fathers as having high income jobs (e.g. lecturing in the university, working in non-governmental agencies, doctors and working abroad). In the same manner more students in high-performing (fourteen) than low-performing schools (five) reported their mothers as having high income jobs (e.g. nursing, clerks in the public sector, teachers and working abroad).

Hence according to the data and the parental occupations reported, more students in high-performing than low-performing schools reported that their parents had a good socio-economic status. Further, the number of students who attended tuition classes for English outside of school, as indicated in *table 27*, can be positively related to the socio-economic status of their parents. Accordingly, more than twice as many students in high-performing (109) than low-performing schools (fifty-one) attended tuition classes for English.

3. Educational background of parents (Q – 7, 8 & 9)

	*LPSs	**HPSs
Fathers who studied up to Ordinary Level (O/L)	32	7
Mothers who studied up to O/L	29	23
Fathers who studied up to Advanced Level (A/L)	23	60
Mothers who studied up to A/L	27	51
Fathers who studied above A/L	7	31
Mothers who studied above A/L	6	24
Students who received some help from one of their family members (parents or grandparents or siblings) to learn English at home	34	97

Table 28

*=low-performing schools

**=high-performing schools

The educational background of the parents of the students was also surveyed to probe any correlations between the education of the parents and the performance

of the students. Of those who provided the information (Table 28), the number of parents (166) of students in high-performing schools with A/L and above A/L educational qualifications was found to be more than the number of parents (sixty-three) of students attending the low-performing schools with the same qualifications.

Parental education background can be correlated with the numbers of students in high-performing and low-performing schools who received help from one of their family members to learn English at home. According to *table 28* more students in high-performing (ninety-seven) than low-performing schools (thirty-four) were facilitated by their family members to learn English at home. Hence it can be assumed that the educational background of parents and other family members was an additional help to students in learning English.

4. Learning English through English-Day competitions (Q – 11)

	*LPSs	**HPSs
Students who participated in English-Day competitions	68	112
	F = 42 M = 26	F = 67 M = 45
Students who participated in more than one English-Day competitions	F = 12 M = 7	F = 8 M = 9
Students who participated in more than two English-Day competitions	F = 5 M = 0	F = 44 M = 29

Table 29

*=low-performing schools

**=high-performing schools

F = Female; M = Male

Table 29 indicates that more students in high-performing than low-performing schools had opportunities to participate in English-day competitions (see 2.3.1.4). The competitions are conducted as extracurricular activities and to improve students' competency in English. The high-performing schools due to sufficient teachers and necessary resources are able to conduct more competitions than the low-performing schools. The low-performing schools due to the lack of teachers

(Balasooriya, 2004; Stolyarova, 2011) and lower ability of students in these schools to participate in difficult competitions such as creative writing or oration or drama, conduct simple competitions according to the ability of the students.

The data revealed some findings based on the gender differences of the students as displayed in *table 29*. In both groups of students, more female students than male students reported to have participated in the competitions. Forty-two out of sixty-eight students who participated in the competitions in low-performing schools were female and sixty-seven out of 112 students who participated in the competitions in high-performing schools were female. Further, twelve female students in low-performing schools participated in more than one competition and five female students in low-performing schools participated in more than two competitions. However, regarding the male students in low-performing schools, only seven of them participated in more than one competition. In the like manner, in high-performing schools also more female students (forty-four) than male students (twenty-nine) participated in more than two competitions. These results (except eight female and nine male students in high-performing schools who participated in more than one competition) are in line with Obzori (2011) and Zeynali (2012) whose work shows that female students utilize more language learning strategies than male students and also with Shoaib and Dornyei (2005) who concluded in their study that females show more interests, positive behaviours and performances compared with their male counterparts.

A figure to summarise the findings of the first eleven questions

The following figure shows the difference between the number of students in low and high-performing schools who had opportunities for learning English as a result of their primary education, the socio-economic and educational background of their parents, and the English-day competitions conducted in their schools. The letters from A to L on the horizontal line of the figure represent the various opportunities for learning English as outlined below. The numbers on the vertical line of the figure represent the number of students. The numbers in the parenthesis at the end of each learning opportunity listed below represent the students who had the particular learning opportunity; the first number in each

parenthesis stands for the students in low-performing schools who are represented by the dotted line in the figure and the second number stands for the students in high-performing schools who are represented by the straight line in the figure.

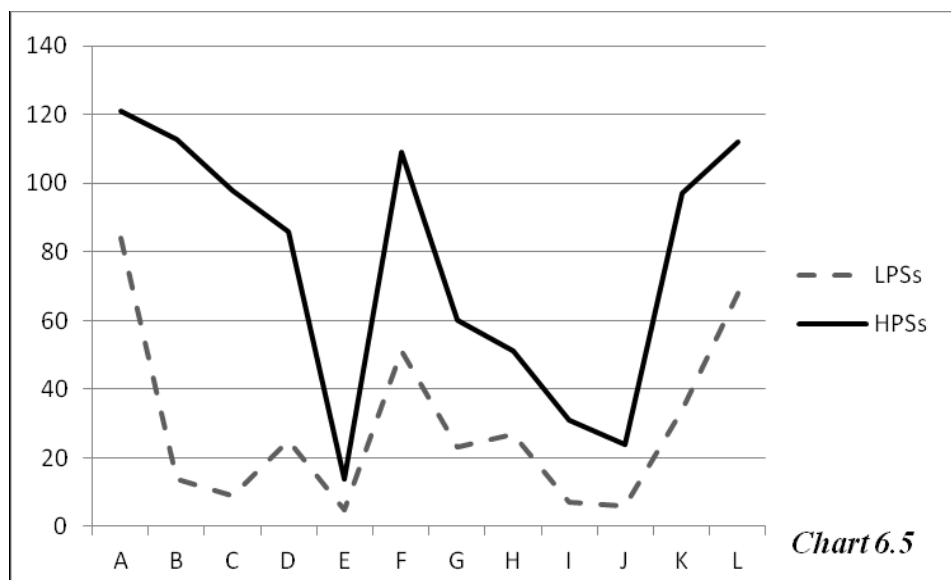


Figure 6: A figure to show the difference in the number of students in low and high-performing schools who received various opportunities for learning English

A = Learning English from Grade One (*LPSs-84, **HPSs-121)

B = Attending high-performing primary schools (LPSs-14, HPSs-113)

C = Success in Grade Five scholarship examination (LPSs-9, HPSs-98)

D = Fathers who had jobs with better income (LPSs-25, HPSs-86)

E = Mother who had jobs with better income (LPSs-5, HPSs-14)

F = Students who attended tuition for English (LPSs-51, HPSs-109)

G = Fathers who studied up to Advanced Level (LPSs-23, HPSs-60)

H = Mothers who studied up to Advanced Level (LPSs-27, HPSs-51)

I = Fathers who studied above Advanced Level (LPSs-7, HPSs-31)

J = Mothers who studied above Advanced Level (LPSs-6, HPss-24)

K = Students who received some help from one of their family members to learn English at home (LPSs-34, HPSs-97)

L = Students who participated in English-Day competitions (LPSs-68, HPSs-112)

*=low-performing schools **=high-performing schools

6.1.2 Students' English learning experience in the classroom

The learning strategies used by the students in the English language classrooms and their experience with learning materials and activities are discussed here.

1. The most used learning strategy in the English lesson (Q -13)

	*LPSs	**HPS
Reading texts and doing activities in the textbook	148	146
Taking part in group activities	--	9
Learning vocabulary	8	--
Learning grammar rules	--	--
Taking part in oral activities	--	--
Doing exercises on grammar	14	17

Table 30

*=low-performing schools

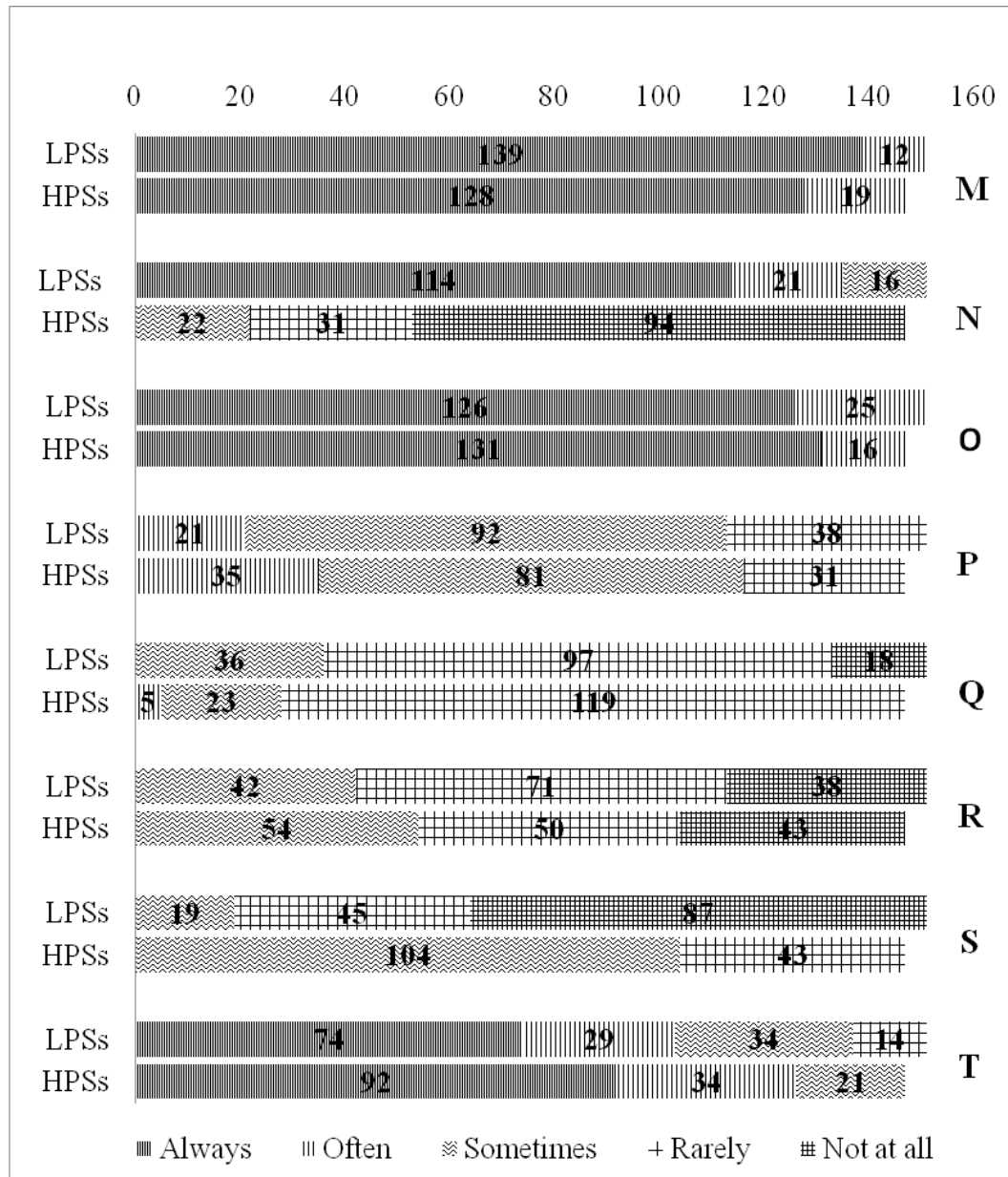
**=high-performing schools

According to **table 30**, nearly all the students from both groups agreed that their main English language learning strategy was reading the texts and doing the activities in the textbook. A few students also chose other learning strategies such as *group activities*, *learning vocabulary* and *doing exercises on grammar*. However, with the majority of students on both sides reporting their lessons were always based on the textbook, the student data revealed that though the learning ability, environment and resources of both the low-performing and high-performing schools vary greatly, all the teachers followed a general style in teaching the English language i.e., reading the texts from the textbook, explaining them and instructing the students to do the activities mostly individually.

2. Students' English learning experience with learning materials and activities (Q – 14 to 21)

The **figure 7** covers questions on students' experience of learning English in the classroom. The letters from M to T on the right side of the figure represent the information provided as detailed below the figure.

Figure 7: Students' experience of learning English in classrooms



LPSs = low-performing schools

HPSs = high-performing schools

- M** - *English lessons based on the main textbook*
N - *Students difficulty in understanding the textbook*
O - *Doing individual tasks during the lesson*
P - *Doing pair work during the lesson*
Q - *Doing group activities during the lesson*
R - *Using materials other than the textbook*
S - *Lessons in English activity room*
T - *Teachers' keen in preparing students for the exam.*

In *figure 7* the data on (**M**) shows that 139 out of 151 students in low-performing and 128 out of 147 students in high-performing schools agreed that their English lessons were *always* based on the textbook. Though the data on (**R**) shows that forty-two students in low-performing and fifty-four students in high-performing schools reported that their teachers *sometimes* used materials other than the textbook, the experience of all students was that their lessons were generally and always based on the textbook.

According to the data on (**N**), 114 out of 151 students in low-performing schools agreed that they *always* found it difficult to understand the textbook while ninety-four out of 147 students in high-performing schools reported that they *did not* find it difficult *at all*. Thirty-one out of the remaining fifty-three students in high-performing schools reported that they *rarely* found it difficult to understand the textbook and the rest of them (twenty-two students) reported that only *sometimes* they found the textbook difficult. Hence none of the students in high-performing schools chose the options *always* or *often*. This reveals that the majority of the students in high-performing schools were likely to cope with the main learning material i.e., the textbook, as far as understanding the content of the textbook is concerned.

The data on (**O**) reveals that 126 students in low-performing and 131 students in high-performing schools reported that they were *always* doing individual tasks during the lesson.

There is a similarity of frequencies in the two pairs of bars represented by the letters (P) and (Q). The exception is represented only by a small number of students; eighteen students in low-performing schools reported that they *did not* do group activities *at all* in the classroom and five students in high-performing schools reported that they *often* had group activities. The striking dissimilarity in the information shown on (S) was that eighty-seven students in low-performing schools reported that their teachers *did not* take them to the English activity room *at all* and 104 of their counterparts reported that their teachers *sometimes* took them to the English activity room¹².

6.1.3 Students' expectations of their English teachers (Q- 25)

Figure 8 displays what the students expected from their teachers in the classroom when teaching English. However, these expectations of students, in an indirect way, can be considered as their suggestions for teachers to be more effective in their teaching. Thus the question served the purpose of establishing one of the operational criteria of the study that is understanding the *aspects of the effective teaching of English*. The following are the different learning needs expressed by students and they are represented by the letters A to L in figure 8.

- A = Teachers should teach students to speak in English
- B = Teachers should teach students grammar in detail
- C = Teachers should use different materials in the classroom
- D = Teachers should prepare their students well for the exam
- E = Teachers should teach students to read English
- F = Teachers should teach students necessary English vocabulary
- G = Teachers should use computers to teach English
- H = Teachers should teach through Tamil
- I = Teachers should teach English through games, drama, debate etc.
- J = Teachers should teach the listening skill
- K = Teachers should use English literature to teach English
- L = No needs expressed

12. The English activity room is equipped with different learning resources such as dictionaries, English reading materials and electronic devices such as over-head projector, TV and computer etc. These are meant to provide more creativity based lessons to students.

Figure 8: Different learning needs of students

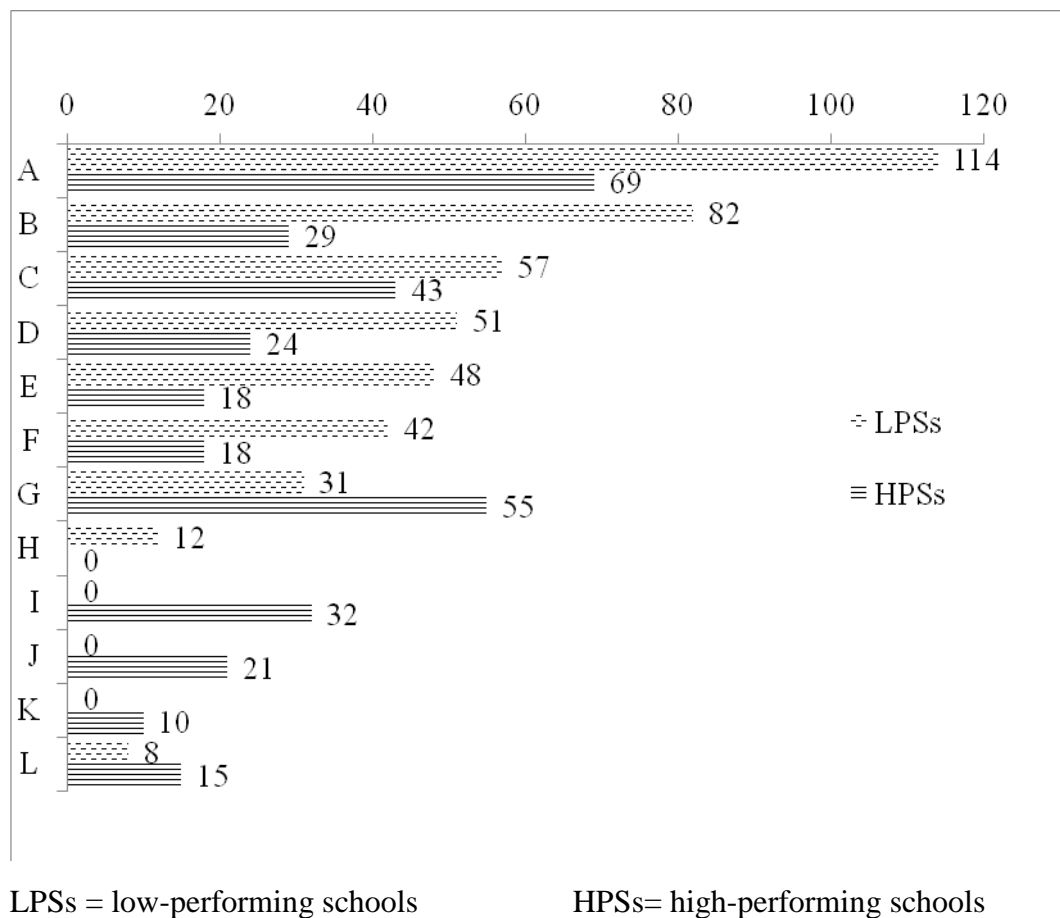


Figure 8 shows that the learning need which was expressed by the majority of students from both groups (114 students in low-performing and sixty-nine students in high-performing schools) was the need of learning to speak English **(A)**. It is likely that they expressed this learning need because the existing English language curriculum considered only reading and writing skills, and only these two skills are tested in the English examination.

The need that was expressed by the second largest group of students in low-performing schools (eighty-two) was the need of learning grammar in detail **(B)**. It is possible that this was because the series of textbooks used from Grade Three to Eleven in Sri Lankan classrooms did not give any systematic presentation of

grammar items as they followed an inductive method¹³ in teaching the language. More students in low-performing (forty-eight) than high-performing (eighteen) schools expressed very basic needs such as learning to read English (**E**), and learning new English vocabulary (**F**) was expressed by forty-two students in low-performing and eighteen students in high-performing schools. It is likely that the lower level of English knowledge held by students attending low-performing schools led them to desire new English vocabulary and opportunities to learn to read English in order to improve their English language and literature skills.

In summary, the majority of the students both at the low and the high-performing schools expressed the need of learning to speak in English, the skill which is largely ignored by the current English language teaching curriculum in Sri Lanka. While the basic needs in English language learning such as learning the grammar and vocabulary and learning to read were expressed by more students in the low-performing than the high-performing schools, the latter expressed the needs such as learning the language through computers, drama, debate and literature.

Though the above mentioned student expectations are found to be consistent with the student expectations in the literature on effective language teachers, the students in the current study did not express any socio-affective skills of the teachers as the characteristics of effective teaching. However, the data revealed some findings on the basis of the gender differences of the students. The finding (Obzori, 2011 and Zeynali, 2012) that the female students utilize more language learning strategies than the male students was once again supported by the current study as more female students in high-performing schools expressed the expectations “**I**” and “**K**” in *figure 8* above. Twenty-three out of thirty-two students who expected that their teachers should teach English through games, drama and debate were female. Six out of ten students who expected that their teachers should teach the language through English literature were female.

13. Students are given some examples for a particular grammar item and asked to find rules from the text. It can be compared with a deductive method that starts by giving learners rules, then examples, then practice.

Among the students in low-performing schools one particular student expectation i.e. (C) *Teachers should use different materials in the classroom* revealed a gender-based finding. Forty-four out of fifty-seven students who expressed this expectation were female. Regarding the students in high-performing schools, the gender difference was not large as nineteen males compared with twenty-four female students expressed this expectation.

Summary

Regarding various opportunities that facilitated students' learning of English, it was revealed that the students in high-performing schools were facilitated more than the students in low-performing schools. The data showed that more students in high-performing schools than in low-performing schools had better primary education, enjoyed better socio-economic and educational background of their parents and had more opportunities to learn English through various English Day competitions. The data revealed that the English learning experiences of both the students in the low and high-performing schools were more or less the same. Reading the texts and doing the activities from the textbook, learning mainly from the textbook, engaging with more individual tasks and less pair and group work activities and being taught with regard to the English examination expectations were found to be strikingly similar experiences for both the students in the low and high-performing schools. A striking difference revealed by the data was the difficulty of the majority of the students in the low-performing schools in understanding the textbook *always*, while the majority of their counterparts in the high-performing schools did not find it difficult at all. Regarding the students' expectations of their English teachers the majority of the students both at the low and the high-performing schools expressed the need of learning to speak in English, the skill which is not primarily taught in the English as a second language curriculum in Sri Lanka.

6.2 Lesson Observations

As said in section c) of 5.3.3.1, the lesson observations were conducted to see if there was any difference between the classroom lessons delivered at low and high-performing schools i.e. whether the students in high-performing schools had more effective teaching than their counterparts in low-performing schools or whether the teachers in low-performing schools had more classroom problems and challenges than their counterparts in high-performing schools. This section presents and analyses the data obtained from the lesson observations, under two sub-sections as explained in the methodology chapter (see 5.3.3.1 c): one is physical and human settings and the other is interactional and programme settings. The ten classrooms (five in low and five in high-performing schools) in which the lessons were observed are referred to as LC1 (low-performing classroom-1), LC2 (low-performing classroom-2) etc., and HC1 (high-performing classroom-1), HC2 (high-performing classroom-2), etc.

6.2.1 Physical and human settings

The data related to the physical and human settings of the observed classrooms in the low and high-performing schools are displayed in **tables 31 and 32 below**. The tables include many types of information such as the types of schools, location of schools, number and gender of students and their socio-economic backgrounds etc.

Table 31 shows the physical and human settings of five low-performing schools which consisted of all three types (1AB, 1C and Type II) of schools and represented different localities (urban, suburban and village). Compared to the high-performing schools, the number of teachers for the English subject was less. The average number of students in a classroom was from twenty to forty. The lowest pass rate of students in the 2011 O/L English exam was seven percent while the highest pass rate was thirty-seven percent (Result Analysis – O/L, 2011). The socio-economic status of students at 1C and Type II schools was found to be low while the students at 1AB schools had low and high socio-economic backgrounds. The activity rooms for English lessons were found only

in 1AB schools. Except for the 1AB school, all the other four low-performing schools did not participate in English day competitions.

Table 32 shows the physical and human settings of five high-performing schools which consisted of only 1AB schools (both provincial and national). All five schools were located in urban areas. Compared to the low-performing schools, the number of English subject teachers was high. The average number of students in a classroom was from thirty-five to forty. The lowest pass rate of students in the 2011 O/L English exam was eighty percent while the highest pass rate was ninety-seven percent (Result Analysis – O/L, 2011). Except for the students of the fifth high-performing school who had low and high socio-economic background, the students at the other four schools had affluent family backgrounds. The activity rooms for English lessons were found in all five schools though the fifth one had fewer facilities than the others. Except for the first and the fifth school, all the other three schools appeared to take much interest in participating in English day competitions including holding the annual English day celebrations.

Physical and human settings of observed classroom

Table 31 Physical and human settings of observed classrooms in low-performing schools

	LPSs* 1	LPSs 2	LPSs 3	LPSs 4	LPSs 5
Types of schools	1AB (P)**	1AB (P)	1C	Type II	1C
Location of schools	Suburban	Urban	Village	Village	Suburban
Students' gender	Girls	Boys	Mixed	Girls	Mixed
Number of students in the school	Around 1600	Around 2000	Around 900	Around 400	Around 500
Grades	1 -13	1 - 13	6 – 13	6 – 11	6 - 13
Number of English teachers for secondary classes	3 teachers	4 teachers	2 teachers	1 teacher	2 teachers
Average number of students in classes	30-35	35-40	25-30	20	20
Official enrolment of students in the observed classroom	30	31	23	21	25
Pass rate of students in O/L English in 2011	37%	34%	7%	10%	11%

Socio-economic status of students	Mixed – students from high & low socio-economic backgrounds	Mixed – students from high & low socio-economic backgrounds	Most students from low socio-economic background	Most students from low socio-economic background	Most students from low socio-economic background
Learning facilities	Activity room with necessary facilities	Activity room with some facilities	No activity room	No activity room	No activity room
Learning environment	Noisy	Noisy	Very Noisy	Very Noisy	Very Noisy
English-day competitions	- School and students much interested - Annual English-Day celebration	School and students not very interested	Some students participate in competitions	Some students participate in competitions	Some students participate in competitions

*=low-performing schools **= Provincial School

Types of Schools: see Table 2 in Chapter Two

Table 32 Physical and human settings of observed classrooms in high-performing schools

	HPSs* 1	HPSs 2	HPSs 3	HPSs 4	HPSs 5
Types of schools	1AB (N)**	1AB (N)	1AB (P)***	1AB (P)	1AB (P)
Location of schools	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban
Students' gender	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Girls
Number of students in the school	Around 2300	Around 2000	Around 2000	Around 1600	Around 1200
Grades	6 -13	6 - 13	1 – 13	1 – 13	6 - 13
Number of English teachers for secondary classes	7 teachers	5 teachers	5 teachers	4 teachers	3 teachers
Average number of students in classes	40	40	35-40	35	35-40
Official enrolment of students in the observed classroom	44	41	37	35	33
Pass rate of students in O/L English in 2011	97%	95%	80%	88%	82%
Socio-economic status of students	Most of the students from affluent family backgrounds	Most of the students from affluent family backgrounds	Most of the students from affluent family backgrounds	Most of the students from affluent family backgrounds	Mixed – students from high & low socio-economic backgrounds

Learning facilities	Activity room with necessary facilities	Activity room with necessary facilities	Activity room with necessary facilities	Activity room with necessary facilities	A small activity room with some facilities
Learning environment	Less Noisy	Less Noisy	Less Noisy	Quieter environment than other schools	Less Noisy
English-day competitions	- School least interested - Students not very interested	- School and students very interested - Annual English-Day celebration	- School and students very interested - Annual English-Day celebration	- School and students very interested - Annual English-Day celebration	Some students participate in competitions

**= high-performing schools*

***= National School*

****= Provincial School*

Types of Schools: see Table 1 in Chapter One

6.2.2 Interactional and programme setting

The interactional settings refer to the interactions between the teachers and the students during the process of teaching and learning. The programme settings refer to all the activities related to teaching and learning processes in the classroom. The observation data obtained under the interactional and programme settings are presented and analysed under the wider aspect of the teaching approach explained below.

6.2.2.1 Teaching approach

The objective of analysing the teaching approach of the teacher being observed was to see whether the students in high-performing schools had more effective English teachers and lessons than their counterparts in low-performing schools. Hence, as explained in section c) of 5.3.3.1 classroom observations of English lessons included a number of issues such as challenges students encountered in fulfilling what was expected of them by their teacher, specific teaching methods that teachers employed in teaching English, problems faced by the teacher in conducting the lessons, the activities the students engaged with, the learning aids and materials the teachers utilised and the interactions between the teachers and the students etc. (Morrison, 1993 in Cohen et al., 2011). These issues are discussed below.

a) Challenges to implement the prescribed teaching method

As described in chapter two (see section ii. of 2.2.2.3), teachers in the Sri Lankan education system are expected to write their lesson plan within the framework of the 5E method and conduct their lessons accordingly. However, there was no evidence of any of the teachers of English observed in either the low or high-performing schools conducting their lessons using the 5E method. Hence, the researcher asked the teachers (following the lesson observations) the reason for not conducting the lessons in the 5E method and the consequent relevancy of writing the lesson plan (the notes of lesson) within the framework of the 5E method.

The first reason given by all the teachers, except for the teachers of classes LC3 and LC4 in which the students were arranged in groups, was their difficulty in having the students in groups due to the lack of space in the classroom. The teacher of HC2 said that there were mismatches between the 5E method and the textbooks as the textbook was not originally designed for the 5E method.

The teachers of LC3, LC4 and LC5 said that the 5E method was totally inappropriate for the students because many of them do not have even the basic knowledge in English. However, the teachers of HC1, HC2 and HC4 expressed their view that even though their students were advanced enough to follow the lesson in the 5E method, they could not finish the textbook as they needed more time to follow the textbook with the 5E method.

Regarding the notes of the lesson which were supposed to be written in the 5E method, most of the teachers in the low and high-performing schools expressed their frustration saying that they spent a lot of time on writing the notes of the lesson in the 5E method as it was a compulsory regulation of the Sri Lankan Department of Education but were unable to use it in the classroom, because it was not suitable to their classroom contexts.

b) The method teachers followed

Since none of the teachers in all the observed lessons conducted their lessons in the 5E method, it can be argued that all of them tended to produce more teacher-centred lessons. The following section describes the features that were common to most of the observed lessons both in low and high-performing school classrooms. There were slight differences in the order of the occurrence of the features of the lessons, but most of the lessons included the same features.

Diagram 1 explains the general features of the observed lessons. This diagram was adapted from two different diagrams found in Wall (2005, p. 21 & 22) about the typical pattern for teaching reading and writing English in Sri Lankan classrooms.

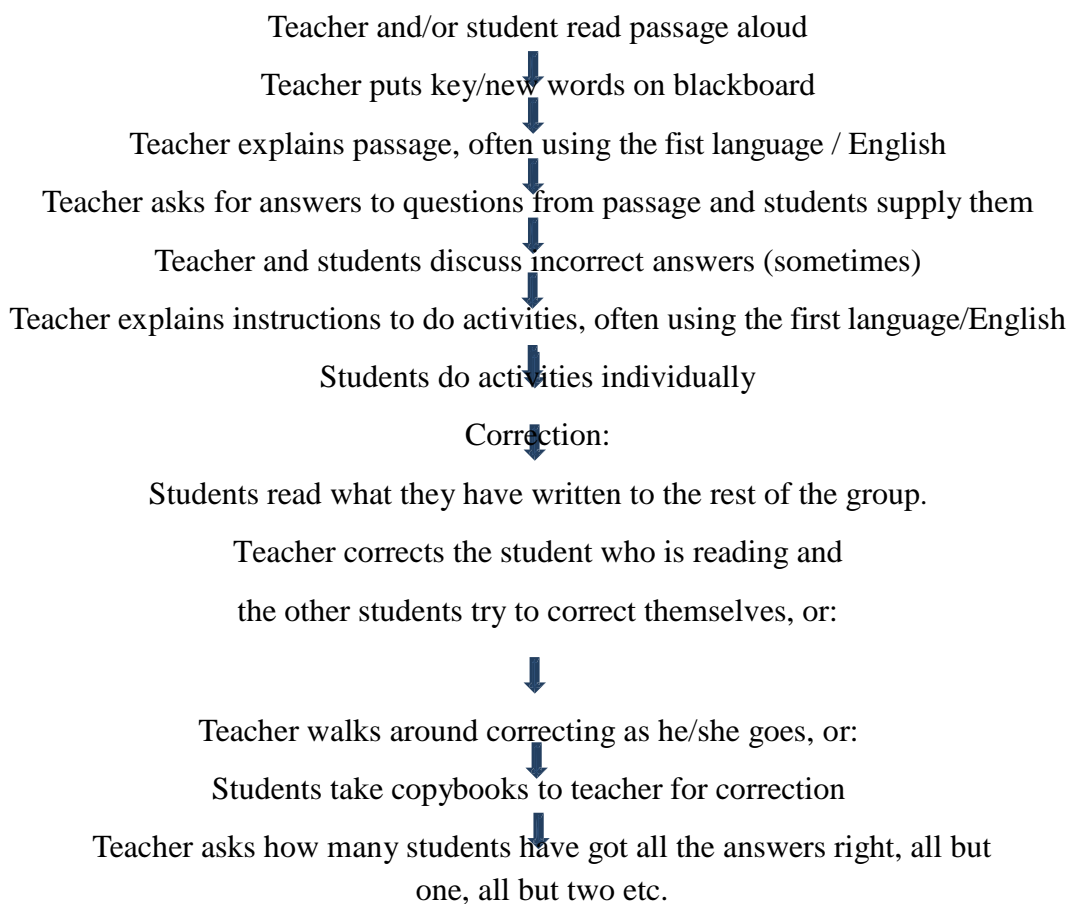


Diagram 1: General features of lessons

The above style of lesson was observed in twenty-eight (fifteen lessons in low-performing schools and thirteen lessons in high-performing schools) out of thirty-four lessons (eighteen lessons in low-performing schools and sixteen lessons in high-performing schools). The remaining six lessons (in five classrooms) were spent in different ways by teachers such as doing grammar exercises with students (LC5), doing past examination papers (LC3, HC2 and HC3) and conducting a group activity (LC4).

c. Problems faced by teachers in conducting English lessons

This section includes two frequently observed problems teachers faced in their English lessons: difficulty in beginning the lessons on time and insufficient time duration of the lesson.

c. i) Starting lessons on time

Of thirty-four lessons (eighteen lessons in low-performing schools and sixteen lessons in high-performing schools) observed, only eleven lessons started on time, four lessons in high and seven lessons in low-performing classrooms. The delays occurred because either the teachers took a few minutes to walk to the classroom from their previous lesson, or they came to the classroom before the previous lesson had finished and had to wait outside for the teacher who was already there to leave the classroom. On two occasions the researcher and the teacher (who was going to be observed) waited outside HC1 for about five minutes for the teacher of the previous lesson to leave the classroom. In the Sri Lankan classrooms the duration of the lesson is forty minutes and on many occasions from five to ten minutes was wasted as the teachers found it difficult to start their classes on time.

c. ii) Insufficient time duration of lessons

The researcher observed that the forty minutes allocated for each lesson was insufficient as this affected the students in both low and high-performing schools in different ways. For example, the teachers in the high-performing school classrooms found it difficult to mark students' work during the lesson so that they could compare students' answers with one another and have a discussion on it. Teachers explained the lesson to students and instructed them to do a certain activity, but by the time the students had finished the activity and approached the teacher for the work to be marked there were only five to ten minutes left for the lesson to be over, and the teacher could mark the work of only a few students. The teachers in HC1 and HC2 never succeeded in marking the work of more than a few students. Teachers in HC2 and HC3 put the answers on the blackboard and asked the students to exchange their work among themselves and correct so that they could have all their students' work corrected in a short time. None of the teachers in the low-performing school classrooms attempted such peer correction as the students' knowledge of English was limited. However in either case, teachers did not have time to discuss the activities students did to raise awareness about English mistakes and how the work should be corrected.

The insufficient duration of lesson time affected the teachers in low-performing schools differently; most of the time they could not complete any particular reading texts with their students as the students were not above average students like their counterparts in high-performing schools. In all five classes in the low-performing schools, the researcher observed the same problem. Further, in LC2 and LC4 the teachers skipped certain activities as they could not cover the textbook according to the scheme of work which they had already prepared.

d) Learning activities and materials utilized

In all the thirty-four lessons observed the students were engaged with reading and writings activities but with no activities on speaking and listening skills. All the teachers, except a few as mentioned above, both in low and high-performing school classrooms were using the textbook alone. The only speaking exercise that students in low-performing schools received was to read out the answers they wrote in their note books. Since LC3, LC4 and LC5 had a smaller number of students than LC1 and LC2, they had more opportunities to read out their written answers. The only speaking exercise the students in high-performing schools had was the answers they supplied orally on their own before writing them down in their note books, but not all the students got such opportunities as some classrooms were overcrowded.

The students in all the high-performing school classrooms were generally capable of doing all the textbook activities. However, the teachers of HC1 and HC2 classes said that in order to cover the whole textbook before the end of the academic year they had to skip the activities which were very easy or not challenging to their students.

In the case of the students in low-performing schools, they needed greater attention and more explanation from their teachers to do the activities from the textbook. It was observed that the teachers helped the students mainly in two ways: going at a slow pace in covering the textbook and skipping the difficult activities in the textbook, for example writing a poem or essays on topics like globalization, global warming etc. as they required the students of specific vocabularies. Students in low-performing schools are generally able to write easy

items such as about their school, family, friends and events in their social contexts.

The students (except in LC3 and LC4) sat in rows which generally discouraged teachers from attempting any group activities with them. It was observed that in LC2 and LC5 the teachers asked the students to find out the answer to a question as a group but they looked for the answer individually without discussing it as a group. In LC3 and LC4 where students were seated in groups they also did individual activities. Only on one occasion, the students in LC4 engaged in a group activity during which the teacher gave laminated charts to students to work with, but each group only had one figure which had to be shared by five or six students in the group. The teacher had to help each group to find the solution to the problem. Until the teacher visited each group the students were just looking at the figure without making any attempt to do the activity.

e) Interactions between teachers and students

This section analyses how teachers helped and guided the students and how students co-operated with their teachers during the lessons. It was observed that the teachers in high and low-performing schools considered the strengths and weaknesses of their students while conducting the lessons. For example, since the students in high-performing schools were good in English language learning, the teachers tried to make use of the whole lesson time with the students doing the textbook with rare opportunities given for informal conversations. Most of the time the teachers spoke in English and they explained the texts and the instructions to do the activities primarily in English. The students always attempted to answer in English when teachers questioned them in English. Many of them succeeded in expressing themselves and on some occasions teachers helped them by providing the necessary English vocabularies to express their ideas.

However in the low-performing schools the teachers were concerned about the low English standard of their students and helped them understand the texts by:

- reading them slowly,
- repeating the pronunciation of difficult English vocabularies,
- using Tamil most of the time,
- explaining the instructions for doing the English activities in Tamil and,
- incorporating frequent informal and friendly conversations with them.

Students in low-performing schools particularly the students in LC3, LC4 and LC5 never attempted to speak in English, but instead all the time used their mother tongue. In contrast the students in LC1 and LC2 made considerable attempts to answer their teachers in English.

The students in both low and high-performing schools co-operated satisfactorily with their teachers during the lessons. However, it should be noted that in informal conversations with the researcher, the teachers commented that students were quiet and co-operative enough for the smooth running of the lesson because of the presence of the observer in the classroom.

Summary

The observation data showed that the teachers in both low and high-performing schools did not attempt to implement the prescribed 5E method in their classrooms and it also came to light that they could not follow the notes of lesson which was written within the framework of the 5E method. The general style of the lesson conducted as displayed in *diagram 1* was observed to be the same in all the classrooms along with use of the same textbook, learning activities and materials. Though the teachers were concerned with the strengths and weaknesses of their students and acted accordingly to facilitate the learning of their students, certain issues were not in favour of the students in low-performing schools developing their English skills. Such issues were the textbook without any adaptation for the different levels of students, the lack of effort made by teachers to enable the students to communicate in English and skipping of the texts and activities in order to finish the textbook within the stipulated lesson time.

The essence of the overall teaching and learning process as observed in the classroom is the same objective shared by the teachers both in low and high-performing schools i.e., simply going through the textbook with the students in order to finish it within the stipulated time. The teachers in high-performing schools who dealt with above average students in a more advantageous English learning environment were generally satisfied with their teaching. On the contrary the teachers in low-performing schools who dealt with below average students in a less advantageous English learning environment managed to do what was possible with their students.

As explained in section 5.2.2 of Chapter Five, one of the aims of the preliminary study was to answer the sub-research question through the student questionnaires (section 6.1) and lesson observations (section 6.2). A discussion on the sub-research question based on the data obtained from the student questionnaires and lesson observations will be presented in section 6.5 of this chapter. Prior to this discussion, the second aim of the preliminary study i.e., to establish the operational criteria for the main study is discussed in the following sections 6.3 and 6.4 of part two.

Part Two

6.3 Teachers' Questionnaire

As explained in section b) of 5.3.3.1 (Chapter Five), the purpose of the teachers' questionnaire in preliminary study was to establish an operational criterion i.e., to determine various problems frequently faced by teachers in the classroom and in their overall teaching context. Twenty four teachers completed the questionnaire. They were given three lists of problems in the questionnaire (section 2.7/appendix-2): classroom, socio-economic and political problems. Teachers were asked to select from each list those problems which they frequently encountered in their classrooms. They were also asked to write down problems specific to their classrooms but which were not mentioned in the given lists. The data obtained from the teachers are presented and analysed in three different sub-sections below and a final fourth sub-section presents the final lists of the problems which were used in the main study.

6.3.1 Classroom problems

6.3.1.1 The problems selected by teachers

The following four problems were selected by the majority of the teachers either from one group (teachers in low-performing or high-performing schools) or from both groups of teachers.

- Overcrowded classrooms
- Noise from neighbouring classrooms
- Lack of resources in the classroom
- Lack of English language exposure outside the classroom (within schools)

The problem of overcrowded classrooms were selected by more teachers in high-performing (eight) than low-performing (four) schools as the former taught in big schools where the classrooms generally accommodate large numbers of students. However the problem of noise from neighbouring classrooms was selected by more teachers in low-performing schools than their counterparts in high-

performing schools as their classrooms were arranged in open halls and were exposed to much noisier environments.

All the participants selected the problem of the lack of resources in the classroom. Though the high-performing schools are generally equipped with more material resources than the small (low-performing) schools, in Sri Lanka the resources are not kept in the classrooms but in a common place for security reasons. As a result teachers reported finding it difficult to access them easily whenever they needed them to conduct their lessons. Finally the problem of the lack of English language exposure in the school environment was identified by more teachers in low-performing (twelve) schools than their counterparts in high-performing (seven) schools as the use of English in high-performing schools for administrative purposes is more than in low-performing schools.

The following classroom problems were selected by a few teachers from either group.

- Teaching without teacher training
- Lack of co-operation among teachers
- Lack of support from the principal
- Exam based curriculum
- Lack of motivation of students

6.3.1.2 Problems mentioned by teachers but not included in the list

The teachers mentioned many classroom problems which were not included on the questionnaire list. These problems can be divided into four categories:

- i. Workload related problems
- ii. Textbook related problems
- iii. Discouragement in teaching
- iv. Practical problems

Workload related problems

More teachers in low-performing (ten) than the high-performing (four) schools mentioned that teaching many classes was an important workload related problem as their schools had insufficient numbers of teachers to share the work.

The majority of the teachers from both groups mentioned the problems of being overloaded with writing the notes of the lessons and conducting regular school based assessments. The problem of doing non-teaching tasks was mentioned by more teachers in low-performing (nine) than the high-performing (four) schools as the latter were likely to have more non-teaching staff to undertake non-teaching tasks which can support teachers, than the former.

Textbook related problems

The high standard of the textbook for low ability students and the lack of freedom to use appropriate materials for such learners were the important textbook related problems mainly mentioned by the teachers in low-performing schools.

Discouragement in teaching

A few teachers in low-performing schools mentioned that they were discouraged or felt a lack of enthusiasm to spend extra time with their students when they found that their students did not show any improvement in English despite their (teachers') hard work. The teachers in high-performing schools reported being discouraged as they felt that they spent their time unnecessarily as they found the writing of the notes of the lesson or teaching in 5E method were irrelevant to their teaching contexts and/or there was a lack of support and opportunities for teacher professional development. Both groups of teachers were also discouraged as they found it difficult to look after their families with the low income they earned.

Practical problems

A few practical problems were mentioned by both groups of the teachers. The teachers in high-performing schools mentioned:

- a) Insufficient duration of lessons to complete the syllabus or to do extra activities in the classroom
- b) Difficulty in having group activities due to the large number of students in the classroom.

The teachers in low-performing schools mentioned:

- a) Students with different basic learning needs demanded additional time and teacher efforts to cater to their needs

6.3.2 Socio-economic problems

6.3.2.1 The problems selected by teachers

The teachers from both low and high-performing schools identified the following four socio-economic problems:

- Low salaries for teachers
- Family commitments of teachers
- Lack of English language exposure for students in their social context
- Attitudes of parents towards English

All the teachers in low-performing and the high-performing schools selected the problem of low salaries which suggests that the problem is widespread among the teachers. The problem of family commitments was selected by the majority of teachers from both groups and all of them were found to be married teachers which suggested they had various commitments towards their children and other members of the family. The problem of the lack of English language exposure for students in their local social contexts was identified by all the teachers in low-performing schools and the majority of their counterparts in high-performing schools. Regarding the attitude of parents towards English, one of the teachers in low-performing schools commented that parents were more ready to spend money for their children on tuition for subjects other than English mainly because of their ignorance about the importance of English.

6.3.2.2 Problems mentioned by teachers but not included in the list

The teachers identified the following two problems which were not given to them on the questionnaire list.

- Exam results orientation of parents
- Negative attitude of students in learning English.

The problem of the exam results orientation of the parents was mainly reported by the teachers in high-performing schools. They expressed similar comments about the attitudes of parents they had encountered. For example:

- parents were concerned about the number of 'A's' their children would get in the Ordinary Level examinations and consequently they were ready to spend money on as many additional English tuitions as possible.
- parents were not concerned whether their children were able to apply their English knowledge to real life.

A few teachers in low-performing schools mentioned the problem of the negative attitude of students in learning English. Of those that did, they stated that the students had developed a mentality that they were not capable of learning English, because it is very difficult and only the students in the leading schools can learn it.

6.3.3 Political problems

6.3.3.1 The problems selected by teachers

The teachers identified the following two problems as the effects of the political context in the country.

- Shortage of teachers
- Implementation of new programmes by the Ministry of Education.

More teachers in low-performing (nine) than the high-performing (five) schools selected the problem of the teacher shortage. The majority of them were teaching in small schools where teacher shortages are a constant problem (Balasooriya, 2013). Regarding the implementation of new programmes by the Ministry of Education, two teachers in high-performing schools identified that English as a life-skill programme made their teaching go from bad to worse as they already

found it difficult to complete the textbook which according to them had a lot of activities to complete.

6.3.3.2 Problems mentioned by teachers but not included in the list

Only a few teachers in the low-performing and high-performing schools mentioned some political related problems such as,

- Lack of opportunities for teacher development and
- Lack of resources for teachers to enhance English competency

According to the contextual knowledge of the researcher, teachers had many political related problems such as interference of politicians and military personnel in educational affairs and appointment of principals and educational authorities and distribution of educational resources unequally by politicians to cater to their own interests. However, none of the participants mentioned any such problems. The state of security in the country during the time of the data collection was tightened due to the recently ended civil war and people were extremely cautious about expressing their opinions regarding politics. The researcher presumed that due to teacher fears of expressing views on politics and consequently losing the jobs, they did not mention such political problems.

6.3.4 Final lists of problems

This sub-section presents the final lists of classroom, socio-economic and political problems which were obtained from the data furnished by the teachers through the teacher questionnaire. These problems were used to prepare the research instruments in the main study.

6.3.4.1 Classroom problems

- Teaching without teacher training
- Overcrowded classrooms
- Noise from neighbouring classrooms
- Lack of resources in classrooms
- Exam based curriculum
- Lack of motivation of students
- Lack of English language exposure outside classrooms (within schools)
- Lack of co-operation among teachers
- Lack of support from principals
- Workload related problems
- Textbook related problems
- Problems caused by discouragement in teaching
- Practical problems

6.3.4.2 Socio-economic problems

- Low salaries for teachers
- Family commitments of teachers
- Lack of English language exposure to students in their social contexts
- Attitudes of parents towards English
- Exam results orientation of parents
- Negative attitude of students in learning English

6.3.4.3 Political problems

- Shortage of teachers
- Implementation of new programmes by the Ministry of Education
- Opportunities for teacher development were scarce due to the civil war (as noted in section 6.4.3.2)
- Lack of resources for teachers to enhance English competency

Summary

To determine one of the operational criteria i.e., various classroom and other problems (socio-economic and political problems) which the teachers of English frequently encountered in their classrooms and the overall educational contexts, twenty-four teachers (fourteen from seven low-performing and ten from five high-performing schools)) from twelve

schools participated in the preliminary study through questionnaires. The teachers selected the problems from the lists of problems given in the questionnaire and also mentioned the problems which were not given in the questionnaire but specific to their contexts. It was found from the teachers' data that their English teaching was challenged by more classroom problems than others, which implies the necessity for the educational authorities to understand the challenging teaching contexts of the teachers and take necessary measures to remedy such situations.

6.4 Interviews with principals, resources personnel and retired teachers

As explained in section 5.2.2 of Chapter Five, besides teacher questionnaires, interviews were conducted with educational authorities and retired teachers of English to establish another operational criterion for the main study i.e., the aspects of effective teaching of English. The interview participants (five principals, three resource personnel of English language teaching, three retired teachers of English) were asked what aspects of effective teaching of English they would suggest for the secondary classroom teachers of English in state schools in Jaffna. These interview participants were selected in order to represent those who blame the lack of effectiveness of the he current teachers of English for the failure of students in learning English (see 1.2.1.3 of Chapter One). The main ideas derived from them are displayed in *table 33* and then the overarching ideas are discussed and exemplified with participant comments.

The participants were coded as follows:

Principals in low-performing schools:	PR-L1, PR-L2 and PR-L3
Principals in high-performing schools:	PR-H1 and PR-H2
Resource Persons:	RP-1, RP-2 and RP-3
Retired Teachers:	RT-1, RT-2 and RT-3

6.4.1 Aspects of effective teaching of English

A	PR-L1 PR-H1 RP-1 RT-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of the lesson • Preparation and implementation of the lesson through notes of the lessons • Daily preparation of lessons • Preparing the lesson beforehand
B	PR-L1 PR-L3 RP-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative delivery of the lesson to increase students' interest • Giving the lesson in interesting ways • Giving the lesson in interesting ways
C	PR-L2 PR-H2 RP-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing the subject matter (English) and knowing how (pedagogical knowledge) to give it to students • Updating the subject matter (English) • Developing the subject matter (English) and pedagogical knowledge
D	PR-L3 RP-3 RT-1 RT-2 RT-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fulfilling the real learning needs of students regarding the English language • Teaching what students really want to know or need in the language • Fulfilling the needs of the student contexts is very important • Not only preparing students for the exam but also preparing them for their life by considering their learning needs • Courage to decide what students need and the desire to fulfil it
E	RP-1 RP-2 RP-3 RT-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fulfilling the English language teaching (ELT) regulations • Putting into practice in the classroom what they learn in seminars • Implementing what the Department of Education suggests regarding ELT • Having organised lessons by doing all requirements of the administration

Table 33

Table 33 indicates that the participants from three different categories shared similar views about the aspects of effective teaching of English which they considered important. Accordingly, these have been confined into five areas and each is discussed in turn:

- daily preparation of lessons
- creative delivery of lessons
- developing the subject matter and the pedagogical knowledge
- teaching what students actually need to learn and
- fulfilling the English language teaching regulations proposed by the Department of Education.

6.4.1.1 Daily preparation of lessons

Preparation of the lesson as an aspect of effective teaching of English was identified by the principals and resource personnel in row **A**. They suggested that teachers should find some time every day to spend preparing the lesson.

The most fundamental thing that makes our teachers' lessons ineffective is the lack of preparation. They should prepare their lesson every day (RP-1).

Though each teacher has his or her unique way of preparing the lesson (Richards, 1998 in Richards & Bohlke, 2011), in the Sri Lankan education system the lesson preparation through writing the notes of the lessons is a compulsory duty of a teacher. However, according to the interview participants the current teachers of English did not prepare the lesson sufficiently or did not care about it at all. The participants were more concerned about the young teachers who they argued had to take more care in lesson preparation as they had little experience in teaching.

6.4.1.2 Creative delivery of lessons

Birdsell (2010) says that creativity which is practised in various fields seems to be marginalised in foreign language teaching. Birdsell's view that the aspect of creative delivery of the lesson as being central to effective teaching of English

was identified only by the principals in low-performing schools and a resource person (in row **B**). For example:

Students hate learning English or they think that it is impossible to learn it. I believe it is because of their past experience. They were not taught English in ways interesting to them (...) especially in the primary school. Creativity should be there; simply reading the texts and doing the activities will not do (PR- L1).

Birkmaier (1971) says, “Everyone possesses to some degree the abilities involved in being creative” (p. 345). According to him imaginativeness, getting away from the main track, discovering, innovating and inventing new ideas are the main components of the creative teaching. The interview participants reported that teachers of English needed to make use of the available material resources and personal abilities in order to turn the language classrooms into a source of excitement and fun.

Teachers simply read the textbook and make the students do the activities and they think they have done their job. But I always tell them that they should come out with new ideas to make the lesson interesting (PR-L3).

6.4.1.3 Developing the subject matter and the pedagogical knowledge

This aspect of effective teaching of English was also identified by the principals and the resource personnel (in row **C**) alone.

Many authors (Calabria, 1960 and Feldman, 1976 in Shishavan & Sadeghi, 2009; Hammadou & Bernhardt 1987; Grossman & Shulman, 1994; Brosh, 1996; Borg, 2006; Park & Lee, 2006) who tried to investigate the characteristics of effective teachers have, along with many others, included two important characteristics. They are the intellectual capacity of teachers, i.e. subject-matter mastery and the pedagogical knowledge, i.e. the capacity of teachers to deliver the subject-matter in an easy, clear and coherent manner. The principal of a high-performing school said that current teachers of English took the least interest in developing their linguistic and pedagogical knowledge of English.

Teachers need to update themselves not only of their career but also of their personal competency in English. It is sad that most of the time teachers of English like to converse in Tamil among themselves (PR-H2).

The interview participants were primarily of the opinion that teachers should develop themselves in these matters. They said that they need to develop their personal English competency through reading English materials during their leisure time, and that they also need to take initiatives to develop their pedagogical knowledge by talking with their colleagues or senior teachers of English and reading some materials on pedagogical issues.

The participants emphasised the personal efforts of teachers more rather than the formal ways of teacher development (attending teacher development courses) may be because of the lack of opportunities of the latter in Jaffna which can be related to the discouragement of teachers in teaching as expressed in *section 6.4.1.2*.

6.4.1.4 Teaching what students actually need to learn

This aspect of effective teaching of English was expressed by the majority of the interview participants (in row **D**) especially by the retired teachers of English who were more connected to the classroom teaching and aware of students' learning needs than the principals and the resource personnel. They said that teachers should discern what their students actually need and fulfil their needs. They also said that teachers should not teach for the examination alone but for the future life of students.

...so I tell my English teachers, besides teaching the textbook and preparing students for the exam, teach them what they really need. Teach them to read and pronounce properly, teach them to express themselves, teach them vocabularies necessary for their day-to-day life etc. (PR-L3).

A good teacher of any subject teaches what his/her students need to learn not what he/she wants them to learn. Of course the teacher has the duty to teach what the curriculum requires but he/she should realise that curriculum is not always suitable to the context (RT-1).

As said earlier, all three retired teachers who participated in the interviews focused more on this aspect of effective teaching of English than other aspects. They did not express any views even on the aspect of developing the subject matter and the pedagogical knowledge because in the Jaffna educational contexts, retired teachers of English are generally known for their greater competency both in English and in the teaching of it. It is interesting to note from the career background of these three retired teachers that they all had spent more time at low-performing schools than the high-performing schools. Further two of them (RT-1 and RT-3) retired while teaching in low-performing schools. Therefore it is possible to assume that their association with students in low-performing schools who generally had more learning needs than the students at high-performing schools helped them see the importance of fulfilling the learning needs of the former.

6.4.1.5 Fulfilling the English language teaching regulations proposed by the Department of Education

All three resource personnel who participated in the interview expressed their views on fulfilling the English language teaching regulations of the Department of Education. According to their views (in row E), teachers are expected to follow the regulations such as writing the notes of the lessons and the scheme of work, conducting the lessons in the 5E method, maintaining the record of work, conducting regular SBAs to students and attending the seminars regularly.

If teachers fulfil these regulations in time, they don't need to rush with the textbook. They can enjoy teaching (RP-1).

One of the retired teachers (RT-1) expressed a view similar to the resource personnel.

In my experience the instructions of the Department of Education regulated by the school are helpful to conduct organised lessons and which in turn will help teachers to deliver effective lessons (RT-1).

Summary

The data gathered from the educational authorities and the retired teachers of English proposed five aspects of effective teaching of English such as daily lesson preparation, creative delivery of the lesson, fulfilling students' various learning needs, self-development of teachers and cooperation of teachers in fulfilling various English language teaching regulations.

Having presented and analysed the data of the preliminary study which was conducted to achieve two purposes i.e., answering the sub-research question (through student questionnaires and lesson observations) and establishing the operational criteria (through teacher questionnaires and interviews, and interviews with educational authorities), the following sections discuss the findings presented above. Section 6.5 discusses the findings in relation to the sub-research question and section 6.6 in relation to the operation criteria.

6.5 Discussion on the sub-research question

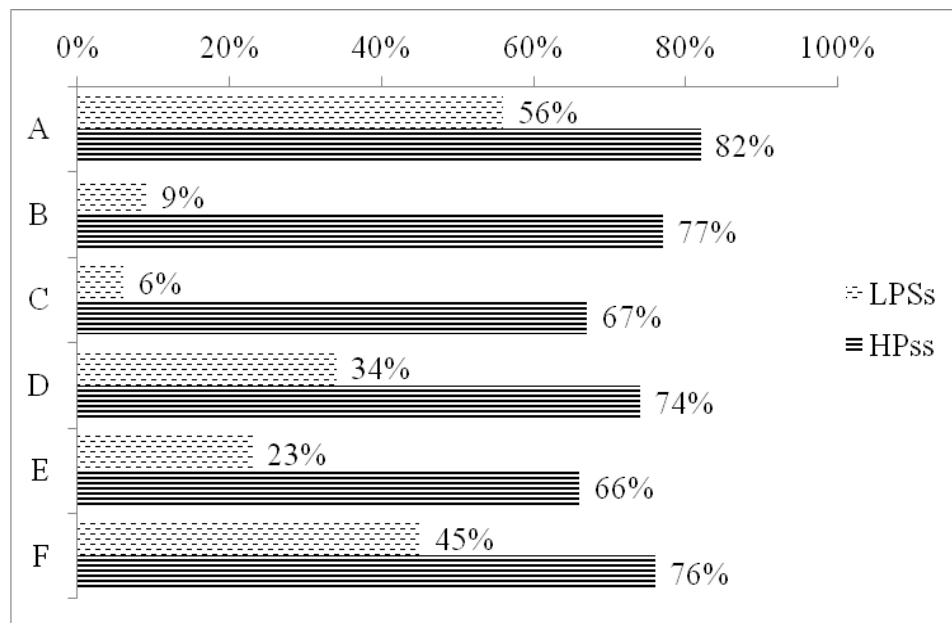
It was found to be necessary to investigate whether the teachers in high-performing schools provided more effective English teaching than their counterparts. This is because, the educational authorities who criticised the teachers in low-performing schools tried to justify their views by comparing the low performance of their students with the high performance of the students in high-performing schools (see section 1.2.1.3 in Chapter One), but without considering certain factors which were assumed to be advantageous to the latter. They also were not aware of the actual learning and teaching experience of students and teachers in the classroom. Heffner (2014) says that according to attribution theory those who blame others for some failure or those who interpret others' behaviours need to understand the views of their world, their prior experiences and situations in order to make the right attribution to their behaviour. This perspective was missing from the Sri Lankan educational authorities (as discussed in chapters 1 and 2) who criticised the English teachers for their lack of effectiveness in teaching English, which they opined was reflected in poor student English examination results.

The sub-research question was an attempt to achieve a fairer understanding of the behaviour of the teachers along with their experiences, problems encountered and contexts in the midst of which they were working. The student questionnaire and the lesson observations helped to answer the sub-research question.

6.5.1 Factors assumed to be advantageous to students in high-performing schools

Tables from **26 to 29** under section 6.1.1 of this chapter showed how the factors related to primary education, socio-economic and educational background of parents and English-day competitions in the schools were likely to offer to the students in high-performing schools more opportunities to learn English than their counterparts in low-performing schools. This is showed in figure 9 below. The figure shows the percentage of the students in high-performing schools who were able to access certain English learning opportunities was higher than the percentage of the students in low-performing schools who were able to access those same opportunities.

Figure 9: Factors advantageous to students in high-performing schools



LPSs= low-performing schools

HPSs= high-performing schools

A = Eighty-two per cent of the students in high-performing schools started to learn English in Grade One while the percentage of their counterparts in low-performing schools who started to learn English in Grade One was fifty-six per cent.

B = While seventy-seven per cent of the students in high-performing schools attended high-performing primary schools, only nine per cent of the students in low-performing schools attended such primary schools.

C = While sixty-seven per cent of the students in high-performing schools were successful in the Grade Five Scholarship Examination, only six per cent of their counterparts in low-performing schools got through the same examination.

D = Seventy-four per cent of the students in high-performing schools had private tuition for English and only thirty-four per cent of the students in low-performing schools had opportunities to attend English tuition lessons. This may be because of the better socio-economic background of parents (see *table 27* under section 6.1.1) with children in high-performing schools, which enabled them to afford additional tuition for their children.

E = While sixty-six per cent of the students in high-performing schools reported to have received some help from one of their family members (parents or grandparents or siblings) to learn English at home, only twenty-three per cent of the students in low-performing schools reported having such help at home. This is likely because of the effect of the educational background of the parents or family member of the students in high-performing schools as presented in *table 28* under section 6.1.1.

F = While seventy-six per cent of the students in high-performing schools participated in English-day competitions, only forty-five per cent of their counterparts in low-performing schools reported having such opportunities.

The above data suggests that certain factors are likely to be advantageous for the students in high-performing schools to learn more English than their counterparts. Those factors may not be the only reasons for the better performance of the students in high-performing schools, because the students' actual learning

experience in the classroom plays a great role in their success. According to Malle (2011), Heider (1958) who developed attribution theory found that understanding human behaviour was more complex than perceiving inanimate objects as the former has beliefs, desires, emotions and traits which have to be taken into consideration to arrive at the correct interpretation. Hence, knowing the learning experience of the students in the classroom will help the reader to have a better perception of the situation to make correct attributions regarding both student performances in English and in assessing teacher English practice/efficacy.

6.5.2 Students' learning experience in the classroom

Figure 7 under section 6.1.2 presented the learning experience of students in the classroom. While there were many similarities between the learning experiences of the students in low and high-performing schools, they differed in two important issues. One was understanding the English language content of the textbook and the other was having lessons in the activity room.

Apart from the aforementioned two issues, in all other issues the learning experience of the students in low and high-performing schools were similar. The majority of students from both groups agreed that their lessons were always based on the textbook and they were always engaged in individual activities. Further on question thirteen of the students' questionnaire (see *table 30*) the majority of the students in both the low and the high-performing schools agreed that the most used strategy for learning English in the classroom was *reading texts and doing activities in the textbook*. Regarding the pair and group activities, the general experience of the majority of the both groups of students were that they *sometimes* had pair activities and *rarely* had group activities in the classroom. The majority of students from both groups reported that their teachers were keen on preparing them for the examination (*Figure 7*).

The similarities of the learning experience between the students in high and the low-performing schools were confirmed through the lesson observations in these schools. The lessons, mainly based on the textbooks with individual written activities and rare focus on pair or group activities, were observed to be constant and recurring features of the thirty-four observed lessons and consistent with the information given by students in the questionnaire. *Diagram 1* displayed the features of the lessons which represented the typical English lesson which took place both in the low and the high-performing school classrooms. The information given by students on the questionnaire regarding the difficulty of the students in low-performing schools to read and understand the textbook, and the ability of their counterparts in high-performing schools to handle the textbooks without any difficulty was also found to be consistent with what was observed during the lesson observations.

6.5.3 Concluding thoughts for the sub-research question of the preliminary study

This section presents some concluding thoughts on the sub-research question:

Are the teachers whose students perform very well in English providing more effective teaching to their students than the teachers whose students underperform in English?

The findings obtained from the students' questionnaire data (section from 6.1 to 6.1.3) and lesson observations (section from 6.2 to 6.2.2.1) show that factors such as the opportunity to have a good primary education in high-performing primary schools, better socio-economic and educational background of parents and more opportunities to participate in English-day competitions in schools had been available for more students in high-performing schools than the students in low-performing schools. The percentage of the students in low-performing schools who were assumed to have benefited from such factors was greatly lower than the percentage of the students in high-performing schools (see *Figure 9*). However

there were striking similarities between both groups of students regarding their learning experience in the classroom (see **Figure 7** under section 6.1.2). From the information given by students on the questionnaire and the lesson observations carried out by the researcher, one can see that there was no sufficient evidence to conclude that the students in high-performing schools had more effective English learning than their counterparts in low-performing schools, or that the teachers in low-performing schools were less effective in teaching English than the teachers in high-performing schools. The findings of the preliminary study on the one hand, suggested that there were some factors that were likely to offer more opportunities to the students in high-performing schools to learn English than their counterparts in low-performing schools. However, on the other hand, it was revealed that both the students in high and the low-performing schools had the same learning experience in the classroom i.e., following the same textbooks and learning strategies such as reading the texts and doing the activities individually because of learning for the English examination.

The findings obtained from the student questionnaires (section from 6.1 to 6.1.3) and the lesson observations (section from 6.2 to 6.2.2.1) supported the predictions of attribution theory (which posits that those who attribute the blame to the behaviour of others should take into consideration many external factors related to the person or the group of people to whom the blame is attributed). The education authorities mainly considered the internal factor of the teachers i.e., their low level of teacher effectiveness. So many external factors were overlooked. They were the primary education of students, socio-economic and educational background of the students' parents, classroom experiences of the students and teachers, the problems students experienced with their learning materials and the overall curriculum, the physical settings and the learning environment of the school, external opportunities and resources for learning English and so on and so forth. As a result of these external factors being overlooked the attribution of the blame i.e., *the lack of effective teaching of English* on the teachers could be considered as a fundamental attribution error on the part of the educational authorities.

Hence in the light of the findings of the preliminary study the teachers in low-performing schools cannot be judged as less effective than the teachers in high-performing schools, but as the teachers argued what and how problems encountered in the classroom affected their English teaching efficacy has to be studied. This is addressed in the main study. The necessary operational criteria to conduct the main study were obtained through the perspectives of the teachers, principals, resource persons and retired teachers of English which were presented and analysed above in sections 6.3 and 6.4 and the following section (6.6) discusses their perspectives.

6.6 Discussion on operational criteria for main study

One of the main purposes of the preliminary study was to establish the operational criteria necessary to conduct the main study of the current research. According to the central research question (see 1.7 of Chapter One), two operational criteria were necessitated:

- Various classroom and other related problems that affected the effective teaching of English
- Aspects of effective teaching of English.

6.6.1 Various problems affecting the effective teaching of English

The current teachers of English who participated in this research through the questionnaire reported various problems they encountered in the classroom and their overall educational contexts. The complete lists of problems drawn from the teacher questionnaire are presented in section 6.4.4. The problems identified by the teachers were not only specific to the classroom teaching but also related to various aspects such as their professional qualifications, the school administration, the infrastructure and the resources of the school, the issues

related to the education system of the country, socio-economic situation of the parents and the political elements of the country. According to attribution theory, attributing a blame on a person requires considering the views of the person's world, experiences and situations (Heffner, 2014). The operational criterion i.e., the various problems affecting English teaching, which was obtained through the teacher questionnaires is the contextual knowledge necessary to interpret the behaviours, experiences and world views of the teachers of English in the current study.

6.6.2 Aspects of effective teaching of English

The other operational criterion i.e., the aspects of effective teaching of English was established by the principals, resource personnel of English language teaching and the retired teachers of English who participated in the current study through interviews. These interview participants from their own experiences, teaching contexts (Borg, 2006 and Lee, 2010) and professional knowledge expressed their views about the elements of effective teaching of English. As they suggested, in order to make the English lessons more effective,

- Teachers of English have to prepare their lesson daily
- They should exercise creativity in their teaching
- Teachers of English should update the knowledge of their subject and its pedagogy
- Teachers should identify their learners' needs and fulfil them
- Teachers of English should comply with English language teaching regulations.

The two operational criteria discussed in sections 6.6.1 and 6.6.2 can be considered to be representing the blame levelled against the current teachers of English by the educational authorities and the reaction of the current teachers of English to the blame they received. The principals, resource persons and retired teachers of English blamed the lack of effectiveness of the current teachers of

English for the students' failure in learning English. Since their blame was teachers' lack of effectiveness, in the operational criterion they proposed what aspects of effective teaching of English should be considered by the teachers of English to be successful in teaching English. Since the reaction of the current teachers of English was various challenges which affected their English teaching efficacy, in the operational criterion they reported what problems they frequently encountered and which in turn affected their teaching efficacy.

The main study (discussed in the next chapter) through teacher questionnaires and interviews presents both the operational criteria (i.e., the aspects of English teaching efficacy) and the problems which affected the English teaching efficacy of the current teachers of English. The connection the teachers made between these two criteria are illuminated as well as their perspectives as to how the proposed aspects of English teaching efficacy had been affected by various problems which they already had reported.

7.Main Study Data Analysis and Discussion

Introduction

This chapter analyses and discusses the findings obtained through the teachers' questionnaires and interviews in the main study in two parts.

Part one deals with the data obtained through the teachers' questionnaire and interviews based on the five elements of effective teaching of English identified in the preliminary study by the principals, resource personnel and retired teachers of English. The study revealed that when responding to questions about effective teaching as defined by principals, retired teachers and resource personnel of English, the teacher respondents reported on their sense of teaching efficacy. Teacher perceptions of the problems affecting English teaching and learning are presented in five different sections. The interview sessions investigated an additional question which was how the current teachers of English viewed their own English teaching efficacy exercised in their classrooms. The data provided on this additional question are discussed in section six.

Part two deals with a sub-analysis in which the five elements of the effective teaching of English as reported by the principals, resource personnel and retired teachers of English were analysed as to how they were related to four different personal traits of the teachers such as gender differences, teacher qualification, length of time in the profession and age groups to which the teachers belonged. These four personal traits of the teachers are presented in three sections as the length of time in profession and age groups are considered together. The comparison of low and high-performing schools and the interplay of existing problems on the teaching efficacy of the teachers of English are discussed in section four and five respectively. The final section i.e., section six discusses the findings of the study in the light of attribution theory particularly Weiner's model of attribution.

Since the current study employed a mixed methods approach, the analysis and discussion of data took into consideration the data gathered from various methods in order to present different viewpoints about how various problems affected the teaching efficacy of the teachers of English. The different methods which presented data were the teachers' questionnaire, interviews with principals, resource personnel and the retired teachers of English, the students' questionnaire and the lesson observations. The presentation and discussion of data obtained from different research instruments were enriched by way of methods and data triangulation (see 5.1.1.2). In method triangulation, the findings obtained from one research instrument were used to verify, support, challenge or enhance the findings obtained from other research instruments. In data triangulation, the perceptions received from different interest groups of the current study such as students, teachers of English, principals, retired teachers of English and resource personnel English language teaching were considered in order to obtain the fullest picture of the research problem. Along with these different data sources, references were also made to the findings obtained from the informal conversations of the researcher with the current and retired teachers of English, principals and other educational authorities in Jaffna, background information about the schools involved in the current study (appendix-1), field notes and reflections so that an integrated view of the problem under investigation can be gained.

As said in section 1.6 of Chapter One, the terms *teacher effectiveness* and *teaching efficacy* are used according to appropriate participants and circumstances. Since Chapter Seven is primarily dedicated to the data analysis of the main study it mostly records the perceptions of the current teachers of English who expressed their views more in terms of teaching efficacy than effectiveness. Hence, it is very important to inform the reader that since the current teachers of English perceived various classroom and other problems as challenging factors against their teaching efficacy i.e., their beliefs in their capacity to affect student learning, the data analysis explores whether or not these teachers' perceived sense of self-efficacy is associated with those challenging factors. Saliently, the data

analysis does not seek to demonstrate a cause-effect relationship with teacher effectiveness.

Thirty-seven teachers in low-performing and twenty-five teachers in high-performing schools participated in the questionnaire. Of these twelve teachers in low-performing and eight teachers in high-performing schools participated in the interviews. When discussing the interview data, teachers are referred to as LPS-1 (low-performing school), LPS-2, HPS-1 (high-performing school) etc.

Part One: main analysis

7.1 Problems with daily lesson preparation

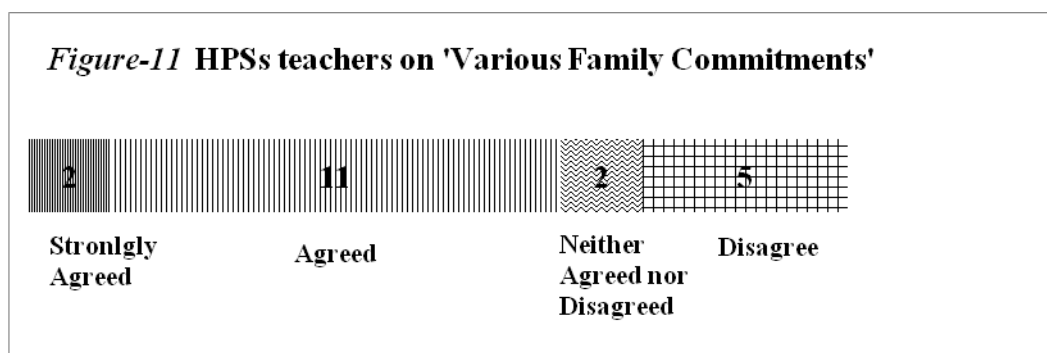
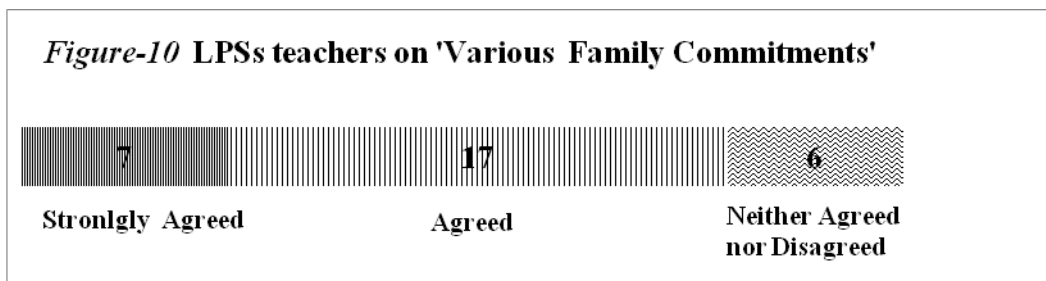
The lesson plan is generally considered as an important aspect of effective teaching (Richards, 1998 in Richards and Bohlke, 2011). However, doing the lesson preparation daily is not easy especially when teachers' lives are pressed with so many responsibilities and personal commitments.

According to the questionnaire findings, thirty out of thirty-seven teachers in low-performing schools and twenty out of twenty-five teachers in high-performing schools agreed that they found it difficult to prepare their lessons daily (Table 4.3.1L and 4.3.1H/appendix-4). Teacher family commitments and teaching many classes were reported by the teachers as the main obstacles in preparing the lessons daily. Both these issues suggest a common problem i.e., the problem of workload which, according to the teacher participants not only affects the effectiveness of the lessons in the classroom but also, as many authors have found, discourages people from becoming teachers (Blase, 1986; Smethem, 2007; Barmby, 2006; Thornton et al, 2002).

7.1.1 Various family commitments

The majority of the teachers in both low and high-performing schools agreed that their family commitments affected their daily lesson preparation. *Figure-10* shows that seventeen out of thirty teachers in low-performing schools agreed and

seven teachers strongly agreed and according to *figure-11* eleven out of twenty teachers in high-performing schools agreed and two teachers strongly agreed.



In the interviews also the majority of the teachers, both in low and high-performing schools identified their family commitments (Table 5.1.1/appendix-5) as the main obstacle in daily lesson preparation. For example two teachers said:

I really find it difficult to allocate necessary time to my lesson preparation.....you can imagine in the midst of all these things how we manage to prepare our lessons. Most of the teachers have problems like these (LPS-5).

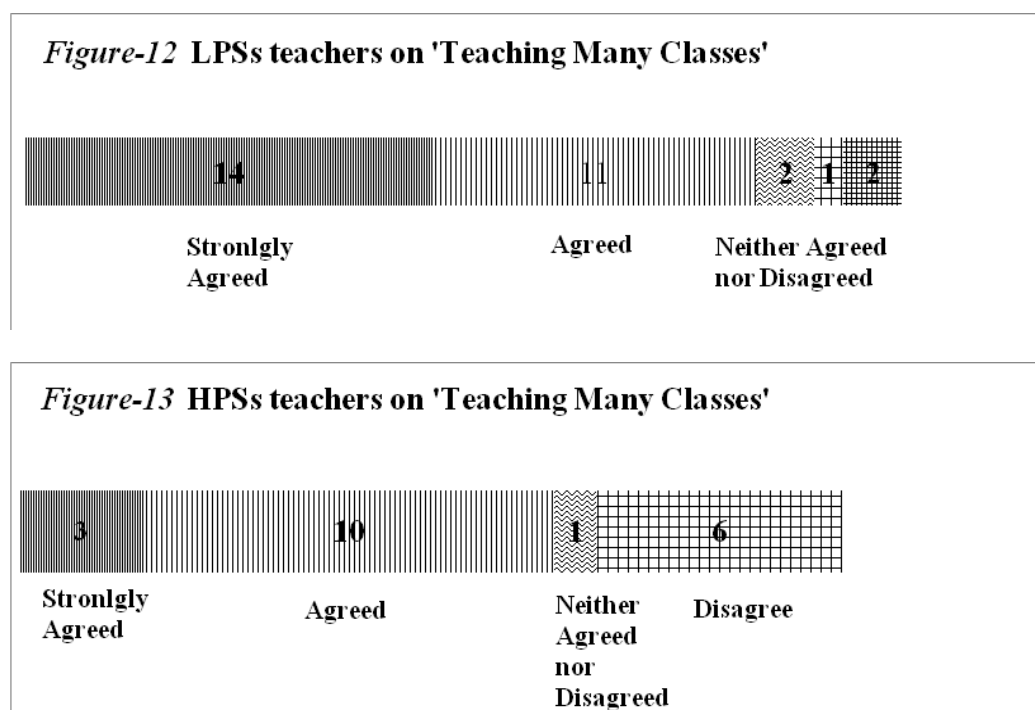
When I was single I really did a lot with my teaching but now family always comes first. I should accept that I often miss daily lesson preparation because of so many work at home (HPS-2).

Day et al. (2006) support the views of the teachers of the current study by saying that teachers' efficacy is dependent on their capacities to manage interactions between their private and professional lives. The problem of

various family commitments can be further analysed in the light of gender and marital status of the teachers (see Part II of this Chapter).

7.1.2 Teaching many classes in different grades

According to **figure-12**, eleven out of thirty teachers in low-performing schools agreed and fourteen teachers strongly agreed that *teaching many classes* prevented them from preparing their lessons daily. **Figure-13** shows that ten out of twenty teachers in high-performing schools agreed and three teachers strongly agreed with the problem of *teaching many classes*.



However, in the interviews (Table 5.1.3/appendix-5) the teachers explained what the real problem with teaching many classes was. Teaching many classes in the sense of quantity was not a real problem for them, because they said:

It is not very difficult to teach many classes, because we are used to it... (LPS-5).

I can manage teaching many classes, because I get at least two free periods a day. (HPS-4).

However, according to the participants, teaching many classes became a problem as one teacher said, ‘...when we are given classes in many different grades...’ (LPS-5). This is further explained by another teacher in a low-performing school who connected the number of different grades to the number of different textbooks a teacher has to prepare every day.

I feel it is very important to prepare the lesson every day but it is difficult to prepare for every class, because I am teaching students in five different grades every day. If my classes are covered within two or three grades... I mean suppose I get three classes in Grade Seven, two classes in Grade Nine and one class in Grade Eleven then I need to deal only with three textbooks. I can easily prepare three lessons and make some modifications according to the needs and standard of students (LPS-11).

Hence, according to the explanation of the teacher above, different grades meant different textbooks and different textbooks made his/her daily lesson preparation difficult and time consuming. This problem of teaching many classes can be further understood when the low and high-performing schools are compared in relation to this problem (see Part II of this Chapter).

Preparing lessons in 5E method

The teachers in both low and high-performing schools said in their interview (Table 5.1.3/appendix-5) that dealing with many different textbooks became more problematic and time consuming since the Department of Education required them to prepare their lessons using the 5E method (see ii. of 2.2.2.3).

I am the only [English] teacher in the school and need to prepare lessons from grade Six to Eleven and you can understand how extremely difficult it is to write the notes of [the] lesson in [the] 5E method for all the lessons (LPS-3).

The teachers said that going through many textbooks was not only a workload and time consuming task for them it was also stressful as explained below:

...every day I have to spend some time with each of the six textbooks. It is really impossible and I often feel some stress when I think of the next day’s school... (LPS-8).

The expression of stress due to the amount of lesson preparation was also found in the views of a few other teachers. One said, ‘nowadays teachers become sick very easily because of stress in the school’ (LPS-4). This view is consistent with Hakanen et al. (2006) who found that ill health was one of the consequences of

burnout in teaching. In connection to stress a teacher in a high-performing school said, ‘if the administration does things in consultation with us, we can really teach happily and relax’ (HPS-6). This idea of consulting the teachers was stressed more by the teachers in high-performing than the low-performing schools in relation to the teachers’ timetable. They expressed that even though they worked with two or more colleagues in the school, their classes were distributed among many grades as in the case of the teachers in low-performing schools because their school administration did not consult them when preparing the timetable and consequently they struggled unnecessarily despite there being a sufficient number of teachers. For example:

You see, I teach in five different grades but there are four divisions in each grade and three teachers for English. If we get classes from two or three grades our lesson preparation will be easy, but you see they don’t ask our ideas or [there is] no consultation. You see, it is an unnecessary problem (HPS-8).

The views of the teachers pointed to the inefficiency of the school administration which was found by Hettiarachchi (2010) as one of the demotivating factors for teachers of English in Sri Lanka. The lack of efficiency or poor managerial support for teachers are prevailing not only in developing countries like Sri Lanka (Hettiarachchi, *ibid.*) and Africa (Boahene-Asimen, 2003 in Alsiewi and Agil, 2004) but also in a highly advanced country like America (Gonzalez, 1995 in Alsiewi and Agil, *ibid.*). The teachers of the current study opined that the efficiency of the school administration could help them exercise their efficacy in relation to the lesson preparation by preparing the timetables that were more convenient to their teaching needs, and reducing the number of classes that they were required to teach across different grades.

7.2 Problems in delivering creative lessons

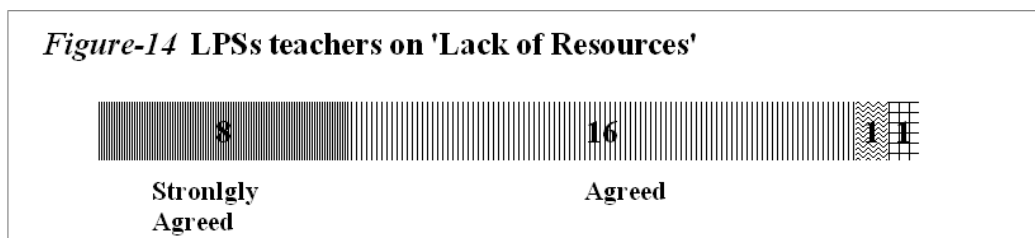
According to the questionnaire and interview findings, four problems such as the lack of resources in the classroom, noise of students from neighbouring classrooms, excess number of students and issues related to textbooks were identified by the teacher participants as primary challenges for them in delivering creative English lessons in the classroom.

7.2.1 Creative teaching

Ministries of education throughout the world encourage teachers to pay more attention to creativity in the curriculum across all subject areas (Richards, 2013). Chan (2007) suggests that teachers can engage in creative teaching by identifying the numerous contextual constraints imposed by an inflexible curriculum. The problems in delivering creative lessons produced different questionnaire results from the teachers both in low and high-performing schools. Twenty-six out of thirty-seven teachers in low-performing schools agreed that they found it difficult to deliver creative lessons, while nineteen out of twenty-five teachers in high-performing schools disagreed (Tables 4.3.2L and 4.3.2H/appendix-4). The majority of the twenty-six teachers in low-performing schools selected two reasons which prevented them from delivering creative lessons: *lack of resources* and *noise from neighbouring classrooms*. Contrastingly, the majority of the teachers in high-performing schools reported that *their fluency in speaking English* helped them deliver creative lessons. This is consistent with many studies (Brosh, 1996; Park and Lee, 2006; Chen and Lin, 2009; Shishavan and Sadeghi, 2009; Brown, 2009) which endorse fluency of the target language as an important effective characteristic of foreign language teachers. However, none of the interview participants in high-performing schools expressed how they delivered creative lessons with the help of their fluency in English. Instead they too expressed various problems in creative teaching like their counterparts. It is possible that the teachers in high-performing schools might have considered in the questionnaire that their English proficiency was a means to deliver creative lessons but in practice it was not, because in the questionnaires they disagreed with two reasons, *quiet classroom environment* and *easy access to material resources*; the questionnaire data (Table 4.3.2H/appendix-4) showed that ten and fifteen teachers in high-performing schools did not agree with these two reasons respectively. This was also supported by the views of many interview participants in high-performing schools (Tables 5.2.2 and 5.2.4/appendix-5).

7.2.2 Lack of resources in the classroom

According to *figure-14*, the reason *lack of resources* in the classroom was agreed by sixteen and strongly agreed by eight teachers in low-performing schools as a problem for creatively teaching English.



During the preliminary study, the researcher observed in the lesson observations that not only the classrooms of low-performing schools but also those of high-performing schools had the same availability of material resources for the teaching of English. The researcher was able to confirm his observation from what teachers both in low and high-performing schools reported in the interviews (Table 5.2.1/appendix-5). Their comments in the interviews reflected their despair when they said that the only resources available in the classroom were the blackboard, chalk and the textbook.

Creative teaching in our context has to be made possible only through minimum available resources in the classroom: blackboard, chalk, the textbook and classroom (LPS-8).

First of all we have lack of resources in the classroom; we have only green board and chalk (HPS-1).

They said that teaching with such resources in the classroom demotivated both the teachers and the students. The study of Hettiarachchi (2010) among teachers of English in Sri Lanka showed that the limited and poor facilities which prevented teachers from conducting effective lessons in the classroom demotivated them in the first place. Studies (Adelabu, 2005; Ahmad et al., 2013; Ramachandran et al., 2005) reveal that the same situation prevails in other developing countries such as Nigeria, Pakistan and India. When the teachers spoke about the lack of resources for creative teaching, a teacher said:

[...] sometimes we don't have resources in the classroom even to conduct a normal lesson [because] we just rely on the textbook and conduct a chalk and talk lesson to students (LPS-2).

Such 'inadequate resources' consequently, may lead students to a failure in learning (Wearmouth, 2010) English. In Sri Lanka the lack of resources is caused partly by the poor school management which fails to make the resource needs analysis in time and obtain the necessary funds from the provincial Department of Education accordingly (Arunatilake, 2007). However, the lack of resources in the classroom is also caused by the lack of interest of teachers as mentioned by a senior teacher, 'There are resources but our teachers should make efforts; if you want A4 sheets go and ask in the office' (LPS-3). Opposite views were shared by two teachers from National Schools which generally have more resources than other types of schools. They said that the stationery they received was so little for their overcrowded classrooms that they spent their own money to buy necessary resources for the whole class. Purchasing material resources will be financially costly, 'whereas changes to behaviour may involve a more personal 'cost'' (Richards, 2011: 92). Though Richard's idea was expressed in relation to the teachers of Special Educational Needs children, it is applicable to any teacher who wants to invest in his/her own self for enhancing teaching, learning and student attainment.

Besides the lack of resources, the teachers also experienced other difficulties as mentioned in the following statements:

We have resources in the activity room but time is the problem... to take the students there and bring them back for the next lesson... mmmm and another thing is that I have more than forty students... you can't actually plan an interesting lesson with such a big number of students in the activity room (HPS-2).

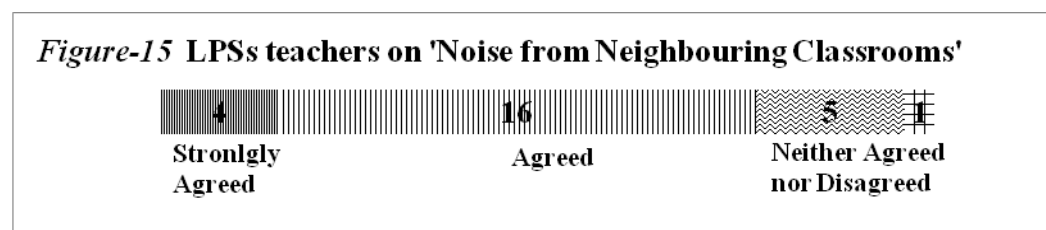
Another teacher said, '...once I waited for more than three weeks to get my turn [to take the students to the activity room]' (HPS-6) since the teachers of all the subjects used the same activity room.

While duration of the lesson was a problem to teachers in high-performing schools in relation to accessing material resources in the activity room, for teachers in low-performing schools it did not appear to be a significant problem as most of the low-performing schools do not have activity rooms. However, ten teachers in

low-performing schools commented in the questionnaire (Table: 4.4.2L/appendix-4) how the length of the lesson became insufficient to conduct creative lessons in the classroom. Seven of them said that the duration of the lesson became insufficient due to unexpected situations in the classroom or in the school. The field notes of the researcher compiled during the preliminary study lesson observations included many examples of intrusions in low-performing schools such as: a clerk came from the principal's office to get a circular signed by the teacher, some parents came to speak about their child, another teacher came to take a few students for some extracurricular events, the principal called the teacher to attend some urgent non-teaching task, the whole class was called out for a health inspection and so on. The classroom intrusions not only cut short the lesson time but also had a negative impact on learning as students' concentration was scattered (Jamil and Subramanian, 2009). The other three teachers in low-performing schools commented in the questionnaire that the duration of the lesson became insufficient when they had to deal with students of varied learning capacities with the single type of textbook (this is discussed further below in 7.2.5).

7.2.3 Noise of learning environment

Effective teaching is greatly facilitated in the classrooms where order is enforced, however the level of classroom noise is one major issue related to classroom order (Kyriacou, 1997). **Figure-15** shows that the reason *noise from the neighbouring classrooms* was agreed by sixteen and strongly agreed by four teachers in low-performing schools as being another important problem in creative teaching.



Teachers both in low and high-performing schools expressed (Table 5.2.2/appendix-5) that the noise of students from the neighbouring classrooms was a constant problem faced by the teachers of all subjects. However, as far as the English lesson is concerned, many teachers in low-performing schools expressed similar views about the impact the classroom noise had on students' learning outcome. They mentioned disadvantages such as students failing to receive the correct pronunciation from the teacher, teachers were unable to decide whether the students were correctly reading or pronouncing the words and found it difficult to conduct speaking activities for students.

Most of the time, I don't hear what my students are reading in the classroom. It is a constant problem in all the schools and it can be one reason why our children's pronunciation doesn't improve a lot. They don't properly listen to the teacher's pronunciation because of much noise (LPS-11).

As the lesson observations revealed (*Tables 31 and 32/Chapter Six*), though the classrooms in high-performing schools had less noise than those in the low-performing schools, few teachers of the former admitted that their teaching environment was noisy. For example, a teacher said, 'Even though I teach in a fully separated classroom I found my lessons often disturbed by students talking in the surrounding classes' (HPS-2). Jones (2007) says that if noise is the result of all students speaking in English, it would have a positive aspect, but it would be unpleasant to the students in the neighbouring classrooms. One common reason for classroom noise in Sri Lankan schools is that the classrooms particularly in small schools are often found in open halls. Arguably, another reason is the lack of classroom management. Though schools have a code of conduct and other rules and regulations for general discipline, the classroom management is largely left in the hands of teachers who need to devise their own method of managing the class. Unlike in England where the government formulates policies for classroom and student behaviour management in schools and the involvement of the schools in enacting these policies (Maguire et al. 2010; Wearmouth and Glynn 2004; Wearmouth, 2004), in Sri Lanka the responsibility for student conduct is generally found with the school administration and inefficiency or the lack of interest of the

school administration to maintain order in the school is likely to negatively impact on teaching of English and student acquisition of English.

7.2.4 Excessive number of students

The teachers in high-performing schools highlighted in the interview (Table: 5.2.3/appendix-5) the problem of a large number of students in the classrooms. The teachers in high-performing schools in the current study were in 1AB schools only (Charts 4.2.1 and 4.2.2/appendix-4). National and 1AB schools are meant to accommodate large numbers of students because they have classes from primary to A/Level including the Science stream and are located in most of the urban and suburban areas of the country so that high ability students from the surrounding villages can join these schools (MoE, 2004). Consequently, each classroom in these schools accommodates forty or more students. According to the UNICEF (2006) this is a unique challenge to young minds as they struggle to learn in overcrowded classrooms.

While only a single teacher in a low-performing school taught in classrooms with an average number of students between forty and forty-five, eight teachers in high-performing schools taught in classrooms with the same amount of students (Charts 4.2.9 and 4.2.10/appendix-4). Three teachers in low-performing schools were teaching in classrooms where the average number of students was less than twenty, but the minimum average number of students taught by the teachers in high-performing schools was between twenty-five and thirty.

The above data show that in the Sri Lankan educational context, 1C and Type II schools tend to have fewer students in classrooms than National and 1AB schools. Though National and 1AB schools are meant to accommodate more students as stated earlier, the primary reason for overcrowded classrooms is that parents generally want their children to learn in such schools as they believe that these schools provide a better quality of education than small schools (Wijeratna, *ibid.*). As a result of this 1C and Type II schools are likely to lose high ability students and consequently the performance of the school remains low. A teacher in a low-performing school said in the interview:

Every morning eight or nine buses take children from this village to [he named a few HPSs here]. So the remaining students who have very low ability for learning come to us to learn and we are struggling with them (LPS-7).

Hettiarachchi (ibid.) mentions classrooms with large numbers of students as one of the demotivating factors for teachers. According to what teachers especially, the teachers in high-performing schools shared in the interview, the excessive number of students affected the delivery of creative English lessons in the following ways.

7.2.4.1 Affecting the smooth running of the lesson

Large numbers of students makes classroom control difficult and also affects certain learning activities such as reading and listening (Hattie, 2005 and Pedder (2006). Providing a suitable learning atmosphere or a classroom climate to students is an important characteristic of an effective teacher (Prabhu, 1990, Thompson, 2008, Kumaravadivelu, 1992, Muijs and Reynolds, 2011). However, the participants of the current study expressed their views that, as teachers teaching on their own in classes with more than forty students they found it very difficult to maintain order in the classroom. Student behaviour in the classroom is vital for effective learning (Maguire et al., 2010). The teachers said that sometimes they lost valuable time in trying to control the students. A teacher in a low-performing school lamented,

You know very well what is happening in our schools. Sometimes half of the period is gone in asking them to be quiet (LPSs-6).

They also shared their views about the changing attitude of students towards teachers and elders especially after the final phase of the civil war in 2009; probably because of many facilities such as the internet, mobile phones, transport facilities to travel to other parts of the country easily and frequent meeting of new people while this helped students widen their perspectives about the world, it was likely to undermine Sri Lankan culture of respecting and obeying one's elders, of which teachers fall into that category. While teachers are expected to shape student behaviour through good classroom management and interventions with

individual students (Wearmouth, 2009), interviewed teachers in Jaffna expressed frustration at the difficulties they encountered such as not having their behavioural commands respected. A teacher (HPS-3) said, ‘...The society has changed a lot and students too. It is really a challenge to be a teacher now.’ Another (LPS-7) said, ‘what we read in the newspapers about our students today, we never heard before.’ Interestingly, during the lesson observations (e. of 6.2.2.1/ Chapter Six) the researcher did not observe any serious student misbehaviour in the classroom. However, teachers reported in the informal conversation with the researcher following the observation that students were quiet and well behaved in the classroom because of the presence of the researcher.

7.2.4.2 Affecting the distribution of learning aids

When there are an excess number of students in a classroom each student is unable to access the available learning resources and consequently the resources have to be shared by three or four students. When the teacher wants students to be involved in an individual task the sharing of resources by more than one student makes the lesson less effective and interesting (Hettiarachchi, *ibid.*). A teacher in a low-performing school reported:

We always use the textbook for individual tasks because every student has got the textbook, because otherwise we cannot get some other learning materials for each student (HPS-8).

The teacher statement above supports the information given by students in the questionnaire in the preliminary study. Students were given some options of different learning strategies they might use in the classroom and asked to select the most used learning strategy. All the students with the exception of four selected the first strategy i.e. reading the textbook and doing the activities in it (*Table 30/Chapter Six*).

7.2.4.3 Affecting the effectiveness of group tasks

Group activities are important to motivate students in language learning (Richards and Bohlke, *ibid.*), but when the number of students in each group is large (*ibid.*) the aspect of creativity of the group task may be affected. On the other hand when groups are formed with fewer students it results in many groups and consequently a single teacher may find it difficult to manage a lesson with many groups. The lack of creativity of a group task was evident in a lesson observation that the researcher observed where there was only one group work activity in a low-performing school (d of 6.2.2.1/Chapter Six). Even though there were only four groups in the class, a lesson observation revealed that because of the large class size, the teacher could not supply sufficient materials to the students which would have enabled the teacher to deliver a more creative lesson, and enhance student motivation. The teacher gave only one laminated sheet to each group and when one or two students were looking at the materials the other students were simply seated doing nothing until they got a chance to have a look at the material. Difficulties in undertaking group work activities were echoed by a teacher in a high-performing school who said, ‘I don’t remember when I gave a group task to my students. They are all just sitting in rows and.....mmmm what can I say?... it’s a mess’ (HPS-4).

7.2.5 Problems related to textbook

Problems related to the use of a single textbook were considered by both groups of teachers in the interviews (Table 5.2.5/appendix-5). However, they viewed the problems from different points of view. The teachers in low-performing schools argued that their students were struggling with the English textbook because of the high English language content, a lack of interesting topics and activities suitable to students with lower ability levels.

...not only in my school, but in most of the schools the same problem. The textbook is difficult for the students to understand. And also there are many boring things for our students in the textbook (LPS-12).

According to the teachers' views, the textbooks were inappropriate to their students which will cause a failure in learning (Wearmouth, 2010). A particular thought which was shared by most of the teachers in relation to the textbook, was the lack of freedom for teachers to choose learning materials that were appropriate to their students.

The problem is no freedom to select some easy or interesting books for the students and teach. We have to follow the official textbook (LPS-3).

I have heard that in foreign countries teachers have freedom to select books for their students....you know about it more. I think for language teaching that is important, because I only know the standard of my students (LPS-7).

The lack of instructional materials increases the job dissatisfaction among teachers (Boahene-Asimen 2003 in Alsiewi and Agil, *ibid.*) and consequently diminishes the effectiveness of the lesson (Shann, 2001). Teachers' opinions in the interviews reflected the need for the educational authorities to know the teachers' views, particularly from rural and small schools, regarding the problems they undergo with the textbooks in order to obtain some lasting solutions. A senior teacher (LPS-1) said, 'Since the beginning of my teaching, I haven't seen a textbook appropriate to our children.' He added, 'The fundamental problem is that the textbook production has no contribution whatsoever from an ordinary teacher like me'. Interestingly, a teacher from a high performing school (HPS-3) had a similar view, 'the textbook always come from the top, they are not bothered about the teacher and her students in (she mentioned the name of a rural school)...'.

Further, the high language content of the textbook and the lack of topics appealing to students in rural schools also appeared to have contributed to one teacher in a low-performing school thinking that textbooks were designed by teachers influenced by their familiarity with urban life and students in high-performing schools. This could possibly lead one to argue that while students in the urban areas benefit from the textbook, students in the rural areas with lower ability levels struggle with it.

Few years ago I taught in... (name of a high-performing school). Now when I teach the same Grade of students with the same book, I can see the

real problem. The government should consider these students and give them different materials (LPS-11).

The above statement casts light on the rural and urban elements (or high and low socio-economic element) of the teaching and learning of English in the Sri Lankan education system. Further, the teachers said that the textbook contained cultural and religious aspects which the students and teachers could not understand easily. It may be because of the members of the textbook writing panels (the list of members can be seen in each textbook) which included mostly Sinhalese teachers with few Muslims and no Tamils. The textbook writing panels which consisted mostly of Sinhala speaking Buddhist teachers may have lacked understanding relating to minority religions and cultures. A young teacher was found to be more outspoken as she said,

The government has done injustice to Tamils in all possible ways. I can challenge them to show at least a single Tamil teacher in the textbook writing board (..) [of] all the textbooks (LPS-8).

This teacher's view was supported by Perera (1999 in Wickerema and Colenso, 2003) who said that the production and the content of textbooks in Sri Lanka reflect an ethnic-based politics and becomes a consequent demotivating factor for students in their overall education. The teacher's comments above also suggests a Sinhala-based textbook is demotivating for Tamil teachers.

While the difficulty of the teachers in low-performing schools could be associated with their students' inability in understanding the textbook, the teachers in high-performing schools appeared to be struggling with time to complete the textbook which contained lots of texts and activities. They said that the number of lessons available throughout the academic year were enough only to complete the textbook in a normal way and they could not think of delivering creative lessons very often as it would delay the completion of the syllabus and consequently, would lead to them experiencing problems from the principals and Department of Education officials. A young teacher in a high-performing school asked,

Which ISA checks our lesson plan to see if we teach the lesson interestingly? The first thing they do is open the record book to check how far we have covered in the textbook (HPS-4).

The teachers' experience of completing the textbook to satisfy some official requirement may result in teachers focusing more on their teaching than student learning (Maguire, 2010).

In the work of Perryman et al. (ibid.) the teachers experienced lack of creativity in teaching when they lost control due to accountability issues. The difficulty of the teachers in the current study to deliver creative lessons appeared to lead to the same effect of a sense of loss of control due to the issues such as lack of resources, excess noise and large numbers of students in the classrooms and problems related to the textbook.

7.3 Problems in fulfilling the learning needs of students

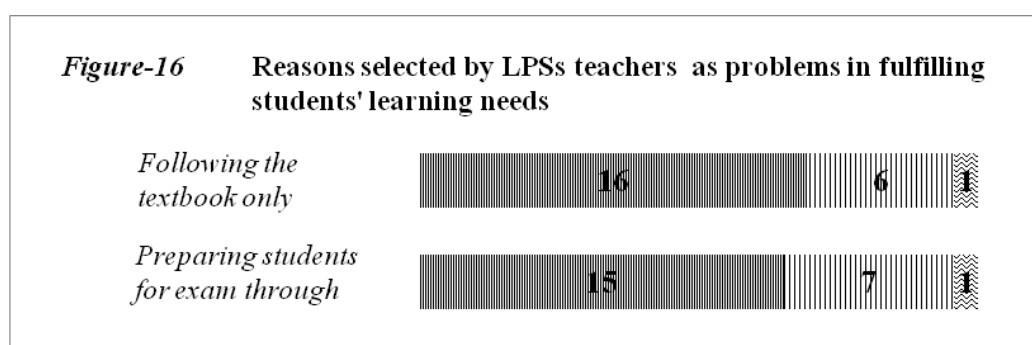
Regarding the problems in fulfilling various learning needs of the students, the teachers were given two questions in the questionnaire. In Section III of the questionnaire, question three asked them whether they taught their students what they really needed to learn or lacked in their existing knowledge. Question four asked teachers' responses to the opposite aspect of question three i.e., whether the teachers were just satisfied with teaching only what was in the curriculum. The third question in the interview asked the teachers to explain in detail the problems and challenges they faced in fulfilling the learning needs of their students.

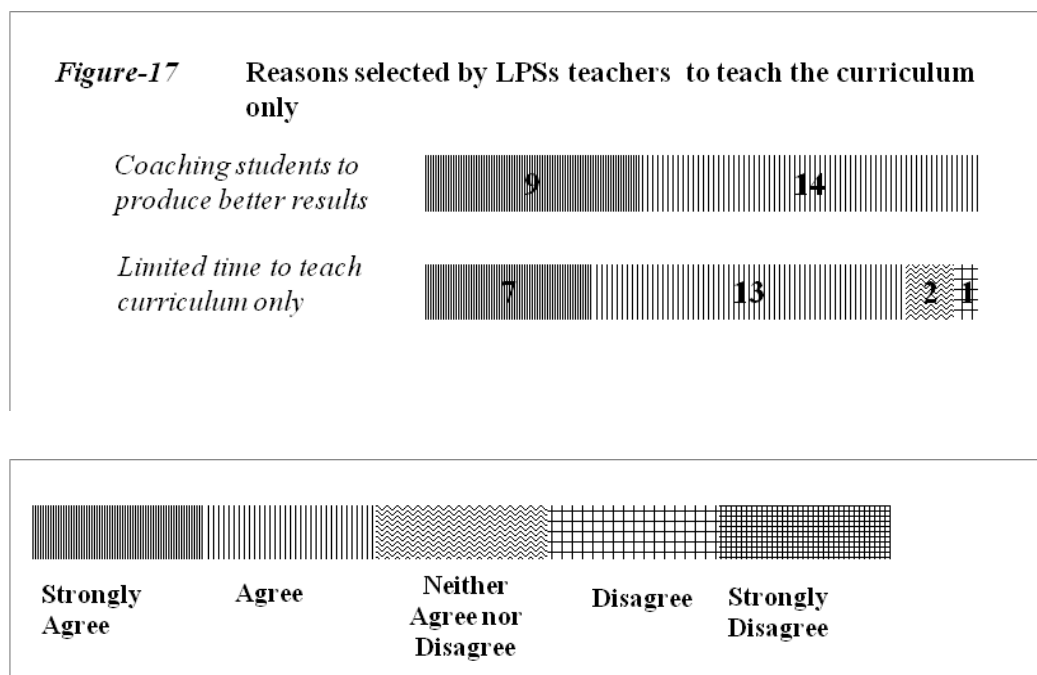
7.3.1 Fulfilling students' needs and teaching curriculum

This section analyses and discusses the findings of questions three and four of the questionnaire together so that an integrated view of the findings may be obtained. In the preliminary study one of the principals from a low-performing school, a resource person and the three retired teachers of English (*Table 33/Chapter Six*) said that teachers of English should not be satisfied with teaching the curriculum alone (question four) but go beyond it and fulfil students' actual learning needs (question three) so that what they learn will help them in life beyond the examination. Hence, the teachers on the one hand, were expected to fulfil the curriculum to prepare the students for the exam (being accountable) (Perryman et al. 2013; Maguire, 2010; Ball, 2004) and on the other hand, encouraged to cater

for students' various learning needs which may not be addressed by the curriculum (being autonomous) (Ball, 1999).

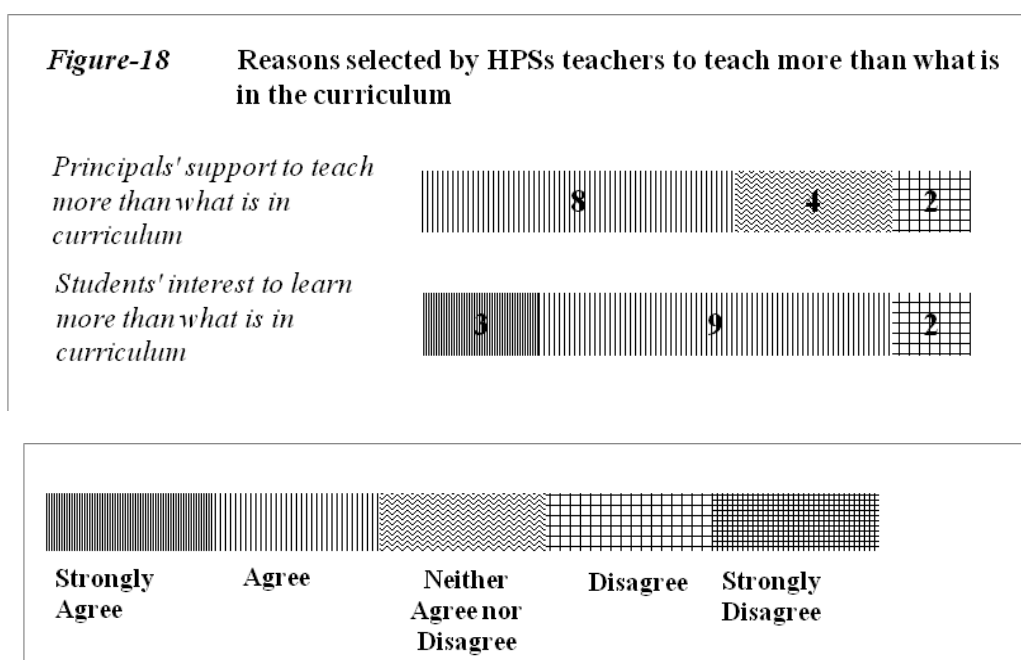
Teaching is not about learning the curriculum alone instead it is about teaching life skills (Ratcliffe, 2014). This thought from a secondary science teacher can be viewed as the essence of the questionnaire and the interview questions analysed in this section. According to the questionnaire findings (Tables 4.3.3L and 4.3.3H/appendix-4) the majority of the teachers in low-performing schools agreed with both questions reporting that they found it difficult to fulfil the various learning needs of their students and generally taught their students only what the curriculum expected of them. **Figures 16 and 17** show the reasons selected by the teachers in low-performing schools for question three and four respectively. In both questions the majority of the teachers in low-performing schools selected the reasons which were constructed differently, but conveyed the same message. In question three (*figure-16*) the reasons were given as *I am expected to follow the textbook* **and** *I am supposed to prepare students for the exam through the textbook*. Twenty-two out of twenty-three teachers (six agreed and sixteen strongly agreed) selected the first reason. The same number of teachers, twenty-two out of twenty-three teachers (seven agreed and fifteen strongly agreed) selected the second reason. In question four (*figure-17*) the reasons were given as *I am expected to coach students to produce better results for the school in the public exams* **and** *the time is limited to teach the official curriculum only*. All twenty-three teachers (fourteen agreed and nine strongly agreed) selected the first reason. The majority of the teachers, twenty out of twenty-three (thirteen agreed and seven strongly agreed) selected the second reason.





However, in the case of the teachers in high-performing schools, the majority of them (seventeen out of twenty-five) agreed with question three reporting that they found it difficult to deal with various learning needs of the students (Table 4.3.3.H/appendix-4). All seventeen teachers selected the two reasons (as in *figure-16*). But with question four, the majority of them (fourteen out of twenty-five) disagreed reporting that they did not generally teach their students only what the curriculum expected of them (Table 4.3.4H/appendix-4). In other words, they stated that they went beyond the curriculum to teach their students. This raised a possible contradiction in the information given by the teachers in high-performing schools. If the majority of the teachers in high-performing schools agreed that they taught more than what the curriculum contained, it can be positively argued that they considered some learning needs of their students which would contradict their answer to question three that they could not fulfil the various learning needs of their students. Hence in order to understand these different responses by teachers in high-performing schools, attention should be given to the reasons they selected to disagree with question four, the comments they made in the questionnaire and the views they shared in the interviews.

Figure-18 shows that twelve out of fourteen teachers in high-performing schools (nine agreed and three strongly agreed) selected the reason, *my students show interest in learning more than what is in the curriculum*. Eight out of fourteen teachers agreed with the reason, *my principal supports me to teach what I decide is beneficial to my students*. Hence the desire of the students to learn more and the support of the principals to teach more could have been the reasons that prompted these teachers to report that they taught more than what the curriculum expected of them.



Further light can be shed on this issue by looking at their questionnaire comments (Table 4.4.4.H/appendix-4) on the main reason which was selected by their counterparts i.e., *I am expected to coach students to produce better results for the school in the public exam*. Ten teachers in high-performing schools commented on this reason saying that when they taught more than what the curriculum contained students are indirectly prepared to produce better results in the examination. Hence, it can be presumed that though the teachers in high-performing schools reported that students were interested to learn more or the principals supported them to teach more than what the curriculum contained, they ultimately aimed for the better performance of students in the examination. Mart (2013) says that the commitment of teachers to their students' achievement is a distinguished feature of teachers. Interviewed teachers explained the

circumstances (exam preparation) under which such commitment is exerted. For example:

The school has set a pass rate as a target to achieve, and you can see how teachers are busy doing the exam model papers with the students (HPS-4).

The above view of the teacher resembles the educational context in England presented by Perryman et al. (ibid.). They said that ‘schools are preoccupied with policies of achievement, particularly public examination results. This had led schools to adopt a result-driven approach’ (p. 179). However, unlike in England where the examination targets for schools are derived from national targets, in Sri Lanka, as the teacher above (HPS-4) said they are set by the school administrations. This is not a formal procedure in all the schools. Principals who are keen on achieving high examination results set targets and as the teachers in high-performing schools said (*Preparing students for examinations* in section 7.3.1.1) they are pressurised in varying degrees according to the expectation of the principals. Though not covered in the Sri Lankan literature, according to the educational experiences of the researcher, in recent years the officials from the Zonal Department of Education tended to focus on setting examination result targets for schools informally in order to maintain the standard of a particular educational zone in the result analysis chart prepared by the District Department of Education. Though this operates at a less official level, according to the information provided by the teachers, teacher accountability for student examination performance has increasingly become an issue in their educational context and as a result teachers’ autonomy in teaching was/is likely to be challenged.

7.3.1.1 Following the textbook and preparing students for exams

The questionnaire findings i.e., following the textbook and preparing students for the examination were highlighted by the majority of teachers in low and high-performing schools in the interviews (Table 5.3.1/appendix-5) as their primary challenges in teaching their students what they really needed to learn for their life (see section 6.1.3 for learning needs of students).

Following textbooks

The teachers in low-performing schools said that they felt pressured by the Department of Education (DoE) to follow the textbook according to the scheme of work:

We like to fulfil students' learning needs as much as possible but there is always a pressure from the department that we should do the textbook with students (LPS-5).

The problem is to follow the scheme of work. We have written the scheme of work dividing the textbook according to the term time but the problem is that students are always slow. We need to revise the lesson frequently and there is no point in moving onto the next lesson without students understanding the current lesson. So we cannot think of spending much time on students' various needs (LPS-9).

As teachers said, even though they had an interest or willingness to fulfil students' learning needs they experienced personal and professional tensions (Maguire, 2010) to meet expected performance targets:

At the heart of this, in the everyday world of practice, teachers may well face a personal and professional set of tensions. In meeting the targets, they may sometimes have to 'teach to the test' and sideline any other pedagogical concerns, such as aesthetic, moral, social or any wider cognitive goals (Maguire, 2010: 61).

Parental demands and negligence

In the case of the teachers in high-performing schools, the data indicated that they viewed the textbook as a set syllabus which had to be completed as a necessary requirement of the curriculum and success of students in the exam. According to them, not only officials of the DoE and the principals but also students' parents expected the teachers to complete the syllabus in good time to revise the lessons with students before the examination. Maguire (1991), Abraham (2010) and Macleod et al. (2013) describe such a situation of parental demand in the current trend of teaching as the parent is the customer and not the child. This was reflected in the teachers' comments as exemplified by a teacher in a high-performing school below:

Sometimes the parents complain to school that the teacher is slow with the syllabus and this is because of the students who attend tuition for English. In tuition centres they always go faster than school teaching and finish the textbook well in advance. When students report this to their parents they come out with complaints (HPS-1).

Day (2004), Maddox (1998) and Ruhland (2001) contend that the negative aspects of parental demands and educational policies affect teachers' commitment and causes teachers' attrition in teaching.

While the teachers in high-performing schools seemed to have experienced additional pressure on their teaching due to parental demands, the teachers in low-performing schools appeared to have been discouraged from teaching English as the parents tended to focus their concern more on their children's progress in subjects other than English. The teachers were also discouraged when the parents were unable to help their children due to the lack of their knowledge of English.

Two teachers in low-performing schools said:

When I arrange extra classes for students on weekends half of them will not come but they will go to tuitions for maths and science (LPS-2).

Normally in the extra classes I consider students' learning needs, reading, hand-writing, grammar and so on, but when they come for the next extra class after one week they forget everything. You see, the parents or somebody should help them at home, they also don't know English. That's a real problem (LPS-11).

Suntharesan (2012) found the same problem (as the teacher in a low-performing school above LPS-11) in his study in Jaffna that parents or other family members from low socio-economic backgrounds are unable to help their children with their English lessons or homework. Wearmouth (2002) has a similar view that while families have a prime duty to educate their children, families from a poor background with low literacy levels find it difficult to support their children's acquisition of English.

Lack of freedom and autonomy

Teachers in high-performing schools said that they had no freedom to teach what students actually need as they had to finish the syllabus in the first place. Hence they seemed to suffer from a lack of freedom, independence and discretion in their job (Gecas and Schwalbe, *ibid.*) which was essential for them to fulfil what they felt their students really needed to learn. They said that when students highlighted certain English learning needs they could not give much time to those needs as they had to finish the syllabus.

In tuitions they mostly do activities and past exam papers. So students often come to us with various needs, for example every year Grade Eleven students would ask me to teach If clause. Normally I do but cannot spend more than one or two lessons as we have limited time to finish the syllabus (HPS-6).

Preparing students for examinations

Teachers in high-performing schools too expressed the same view that they were expected to prepare students for the examination rather than fulfilling students learning needs as education increasingly became result oriented (Perryman et al. *ibid.*). They said that their school administration was very keen in maintaining the name of the school and attainment standard through the excellent performance of students in public examinations.

No principal is against that students should learn something valuable for their future life but they give priority for the recognition of the school through students' performance. They insist on one hundred per cent pass rate of students (HPS-3).

From what the teachers in low and high-performing schools said above, it can be argued that not only the principals but also the parents had the tendency to expect more accountability than autonomy from the teachers. However, though the teachers in both low and high-performing schools were expected to be accountable for their students' performance, only the students of teachers in high-performing schools performed well in the public examination. This may be on the one hand, as the preliminary study revealed (*Tables 26, 27 and 28/Chapter Six*), because of the better foundation on English for the students in high-performing schools in

their primary schools and more opportunities for them to learn English due to the better socio-economic and educational background of their parents. On the other hand, it can be argued that they were encouraged to perform excellently because their results are made public. It is said that in countries where schools account for their results by posting achievement data publicly, students tend to perform better (Pisa Focus, 2011). As a teachers in a high-performing school said:

...in Jaffna it has become a culture that schools advertise in the newspaper how many 'A's from this school or that school... yes we teach for the exam results and they also learn for the results (HPS-6).

As A* -C grades in GCSE (general certificate of secondary education) examinations become the key national public indicator of school performance in England (Perryman et al. *ibid.*), so are the grades A and B which are published in the local newspapers in Sri Lanka when the O/L and A/L results are out. This, like the performance tables in England, informs parents' choices between high and low-performing secondary schools for their children.

7.3.1.2 Students' learning needs should have been addressed in the primary school

Apart from the reasons such as following the textbook and preparing students for the exams, an important reason given by the teachers in low-performing schools (Table: 5.3.2 /appendix-5) for not being able to fulfil students' learning needs was the nature of their learning needs. Teachers found that their student learning needs were so basic that they felt they should have been properly addressed through their primary school English curriculum. A teacher said,

Sometimes I really doubt if I am teaching Grade Ten students. They can't do even some basic grammar items or they can't spell or pronounce even simple words ... mmm say for example... shoe or shirt or library. I wonder what their primary teachers did to these students for five years? (LPS-3)

The majority of the teachers in low-performing schools seemed to have the opinion that the Activity Based Oral English (ABOE) or the entire English language curriculum for the primary students is neglected in most of the schools

probably because of the lack of proficient teachers to teach the primary English language curriculum. Fernando and Mallawa (2003) who conducted a survey about the state of ABOE in seventeen districts of Sri Lanka found that it was a failure in all the districts studied. This is because as two teachers in low-performing schools in this study said, ‘The ministry does not pay proper attention to the primary English programme’ (LPS-5) and ‘... without teaching certain basic things they [students] can’t understand the textbook also’ (LPS-11). The views of the teachers in low-performing schools revealed that they were probably happy to teach the basic learning needs of the students primarily because of their interest in learning the basic language items outside the textbook.

I really like to teach my students from the beginning because they are also happy when they learn basic items. But it is difficult to do with the textbook (LPS-9).

Thus the teachers in low-performing schools sought to be more autonomous in teaching English and not be stressed by the issues of examination accountability. Their comments further showed that these teachers’ valued their professional judgement which in turn motivated them in their teaching of English (Ball, 1999).

7.4 Problems of teacher self-development

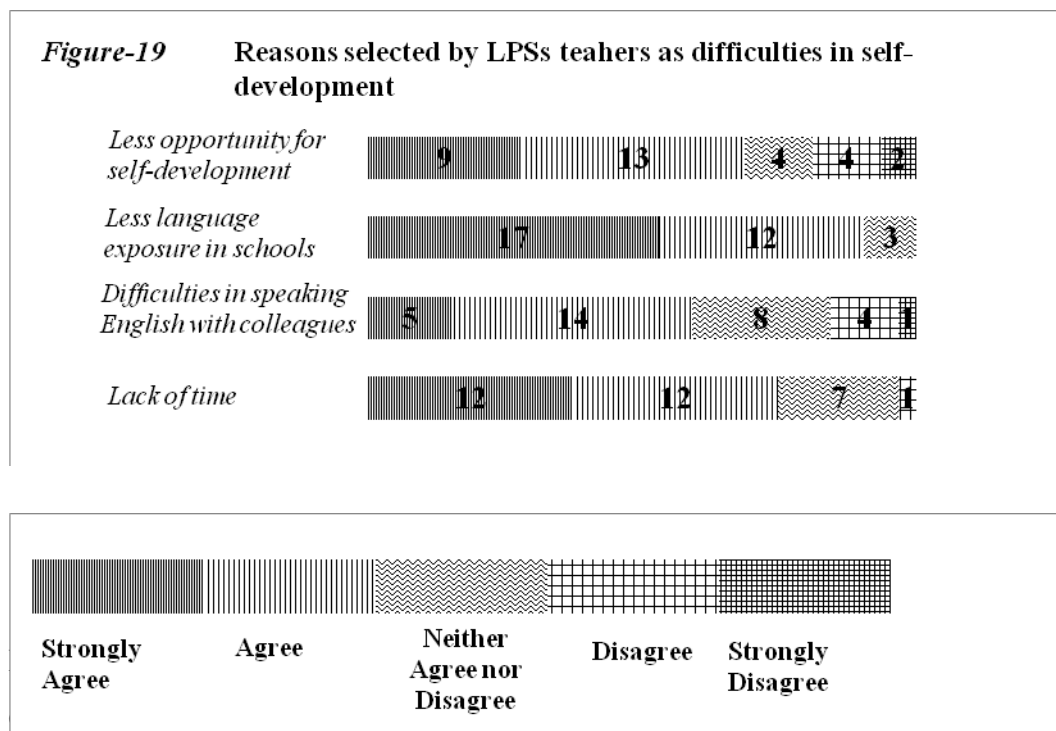
The fifth and sixth question in Section III of the questionnaire dealt with the self-development of teachers. There were two aspects concerning the self-development of teachers. The fifth question dealt with the self-development in the subject matter of teachers i.e. the English language and the sixth question dealt with self-development in teaching of the subject matter i.e., the pedagogical development of teachers. The fourth question in the interview also discussed below explored both aspects of teacher self-development.

7.4.1 Self-development in English language

Many studies (Brosh, 1996; Park and Lee, 2006; Chen and Lin, 2009; Shishavan and Sadeghi, 2009) identify the English proficiency of teachers as an important characteristic of their language teaching (section 4.1.3.2/Chapter Four). According to the questionnaire finding (Table 4.3.5L/appendix-4), thirty-two out of thirty-

seven teachers in low-performing schools reported that they found it difficult to spend time to develop their personal knowledge of English.

Figure-19 shows that all four reasons given in the questionnaire were selected by the majority of the teachers in low-performing schools. However, the reason selected by the highest number of the participants (twenty-nine out of thirty-two) was *less language exposure in schools*. Twelve and seventeen teachers in low-performing schools agreed and strongly agreed with this reason respectively. The reason the second highest number of teachers agreed with was the *lack of time* for self-development. Twelve teachers in low-performing schools agreed and the same number of teachers strongly agreed with this reason.



Twenty-five teachers reported they were able to develop their knowledge of English. They selected the reason, *Teachers are expected to promote English at schools* as a contributing factor in developing their personal knowledge of English.

The interview data revealed (Table 5.4.1/appendix-5) that the views of most of the teachers in low and the high-performing schools focused primarily on the aspect of the lack of English language exposure which is very important for both the first

and the second language acquisition (Ismail, 1991). The views of teachers highlighted three areas in which they lacked English language exposure: inside the classroom, in the school environment and in their social contexts.

7.4.1.1 Lack of English language exposure in the classroom

In the interview sessions (Table 5.4.1/appendix57) more teachers in low-performing than high-performing schools highlighted the lack of language exposure in their classrooms. According to teachers in low-performing schools they were able to develop their knowledge of English, or more appropriately they were able to use their language in the classroom only by giving some simple commands or instruction to students. However, since their students were generally weak in English, teachers rarely received students' response in English. Hence opportunities for them to develop their English language skills in the classroom were very limited. A teacher said,

You see, by speaking to students we can improve our communicative skill; it is a good opportunity but unfortunately students rarely attempt to respond in English (LPS-2).

However studies (e.g. Prabhu, 1990; Muijs and Reynold 2011) view an effective teacher as one who creates a learning atmosphere or classroom climate for student learning. According to what the teachers in high-performing schools reported in the interview, they seemed to get more opportunities in the classroom to create learning opportunities as their students were able to converse in English fairly well. A teacher in a high-performing school said:

You know (sic) no [that] they can speak well. Of course there are students who are afraid to open their mouth, but generally they can answer in good English (HPS-7).

However, according to what was observed by the researcher during the lesson observation (e of 6.2.2.1/Chapter Six) in the preliminary study, the teachers in high-performing schools though their students had the ability to converse in English, spent most of the time explaining the textbook to students and instructing them to do the activities from the textbook; the opportunity for students to converse in English was very much restricted. The reason as explained by

teachers elsewhere in this analysis section was the pressure they experienced from school administrations to finish the syllabus on time. This was supported by a teacher (HPS-2) who said, ‘it is true that we are always keen on finishing the book’ and another (HPS-7) said, ‘it happened often that we rush through the textbook with no speaking activity at all’. However, Allwright (1982: 10 in Davies, 2011: 1) claimed that teachers who ‘work’ too much in the classroom were not teaching effectively. He commented that a good language teacher should be able to ‘get students to do more work’ in the classroom. But the student work as described by a principal in a high-performing school in an informal conversation with the researcher during the preliminary study was not helpful to improve either the students’ or teachers’ communicative competence in English in the way that Allwright (ibid.) described:

You know how they teach, they generally instruct the students to start doing the activities from the book if they are getting late [to come to the classroom], but we can’t blame them because the system is that. Only reading and writing for the exam and so they do that.

7.4.1.2 *Lack of English language exposure in the school environment*

According to the interview data (Table 5.4.1/appendix-5) both the teachers in low and high-performing schools appeared to have received very limited exposure to the English language in their school environment. In the school environment teachers generally conversed with teachers of other subjects or principals in their first language (Tamil) as it was more convenient to everyone. In low-performing schools chances tended to be limited for teachers to develop their knowledge of English in the school environment as there were fewer teachers or sometimes only a single teacher for teaching English. A young teacher in a low-performing school said,

I am the only English teacher in my school. No other teachers know English; not even the principal. The students are very poor in English. No chances for me to speak English at all. Sometimes when I go to the department, when I want to speak to the English AD [Additional Director or English], I check my English sentences few times before I speak. Yes, it’s true... because the problem, I am not familiar [with speaking English] (LPS-8).

This study suggests that the teachers of English with no colleague or other staff who know English are likely to be deprived of opportunities for learning and developing their English competency which is likely to undermine their teaching efficacy.

In high-performing schools there are generally three or more teachers to teach English and they can possibly converse in English to develop their English language skills further. However teachers in these schools reported in the interview that they found it difficult to converse in English when teachers of other subjects, especially those teachers who did not know English were around. They said,

You know well that it is not good to speak in English when others don't know the language (HPS-3).

If we speak in English, other teachers who don't speak English will be offended, because you know... it means or... they think that we don't want them to understand what we talk (HPS-7).

It was also the experience of the researcher that culturally such situations mentioned by the teacher above tended to convey negative ideas about the teachers who spoke little or no English, and such teachers in turn felt that those more proficient in English spoke in English to pass on some secret information or to show off their knowledge of English. Notwithstanding, Suntharesan (2012) found that in government departments the verbal communication among employees whether official or unofficial is entirely in Tamil. Therefore even though Sri Lanka has a bilingual expectation of English being used as well as Tamil, the difficulties the teachers in this study recounted of not being able to converse in English with colleagues is not unusual in other spheres of employment engaged in by Tamils.

7.4.1.3 Lack of English language exposure in social contexts

In the social contexts of teachers, the lack of language exposure was likely to be felt almost equally by the teachers in low and high-performing schools, because they all lived in the same social context which was largely governed by the usage of the teachers' first language (Crystal, 1997 in Liyanage, 2004). A teacher (LPS-

9) said, ‘there are no opportunities for me to develop my English language at home or in my social contexts’. Suntharesan (ibid: 4) contends that, ‘a predominantly Tamil monolingual situation in Jaffna today leads to the lesser extent of the use of English in this region’. This was supported by a teacher in a high-performing school who said that her teaching was not effective as teachers themselves were not exposed to the language.

The biggest disadvantage for us teachers in Jaffna is the absence of [English] language exposure where we live. Because of this we are also not able to help students effectively (HPS-7).

Thus it is evident that both the teachers in low and high-performing schools faced the problem of the lack of English language exposure in their day-to-day life both in and outside the school.

7.4.2 Lack of English language exposure due to existing English language curriculum

The data indicated that the majority of the teachers from both groups had the opinion that the lack of English language exposure was partly caused by the English language curriculum (Table 5.4.2/appendix-5) which focused on reading and writing skills. This information seemed to imply that the speaking and listening skills of the English language were neglected almost completely.

We teachers and our students face the same problem in learning the language. Students learn only reading and writing and because of this teachers also fail to develop the other language skills; listening and speaking (LPS-4).

I would say my reading or writing is much better than speaking because I have no chance to develop it (HPS-2).

During the time of data collection of the current research, the Presidential Task Force in Sri Lanka had already introduced a programme called ‘English as a life-skill Programme’ (ELSP) to develop students’ speaking skills (Fernando, 2013). However, none of the teachers expressed any positive views that it helped them develop their English proficiency. Instead, the views of some teachers in high-performing schools about the ELSP seemed to reveal that their school

administrations were not bothered about its implementation in the classroom. A teacher in a high-performing school said,

Our principal does not even open his mouth about this programme. We just go on with the textbook as before (HPS-2).

The teachers said that the implementation of ELSP in classrooms was not successful as the teachers, the principals or even the authorities from the Department of Education were not sure whether students' speaking skills would be tested in the O/L final examination. A teacher in a high-performing school said,

They have a duty to tell, so they tell us that we should do the English as life skill programme once a week. But most of the teachers don't do it, because even the department does not know if the ministry will have a different English exam for the O/L. You wait and see it will simply disappear after sometime (HPS-4).

It was observed by the researcher that the discussion on 'English as a life-skill Programme' (ELSP) frustrated teachers from both groups. One (HPS-8) said, 'it is a good thing, but the government messes up things by introducing new things all the time. No planning, no supervising, just doing'. His idea is consistent with Sumanasekara (2010) that the government in Sri Lanka revises the curriculum too often. A senior official from the Department of Education said in an informal conversation with the researcher about the ELSP, 'it's an idea of the president; you know the situation in the country. We just do what we are told'. The senior teachers from both groups expressed views not only about ELSP but about what the government was doing in general in English language teaching.

I am sorry to speak politics here, but that is the truth. The problem is that everything is decided by Colombo. The provincial education ministry has nothing to do with the curriculum which is suitable to our own children. They just implement what is proposed by the central government. Then why is this thirteenth amendment¹⁴ and creation of provincial governments? (HPS-6).

14. In 1987 the Sri Lankan Parliament passed the Thirteenth Amendment to the 1978 Constitution of Sri Lanka and the Provincial Councils Act No 42 of 1987 to establish provincial councils. The amendment aimed at creating the devolution of powers to the provincial councils on various issues including education.

The above statements are supported by Little (2010) who found that the educational policy making process in Sri Lanka gradually lost its transparency and was no longer subject to long debates or consultation but heavily politicised. From what the teachers said above, it was revealed that the available learning opportunities for both teachers and students in the Sri Lankan education system are not likely to be productive enough as they do not properly address the local student needs and teaching circumstances. According to the teachers the government had a top down approach in implementing policies or introducing educational programmes in which the contextual needs and expectations of the teachers were ignored.

7.4.3 Self-development in pedagogical knowledge of English

The second aspect of self-development examined was development in pedagogical knowledge of English which is given greater importance in the literature on effective teaching of English (Brosh, 1996; Park and Lee, 2006; Barnes, 2010; Chen, 2012). In the questionnaire and the interview the teachers were informed of the kind of information the current research sought from them in relation to the self-development of their pedagogical knowledge (2.13/appendix-2).

According to the questionnaire findings (Tables: 4.3.6L and 4.3.6H/appendix-4), twenty-five out of thirty-seven teachers in low-performing schools reported that they could not develop their pedagogical knowledge of English. In the case of the teachers in high-performing schools, an opposite result was found. The majority of them i.e., seventeen out of twenty-five teachers in high-performing schools reported that they were able to develop their pedagogical knowledge of English.

The current professional qualifications of the teachers and the available opportunities for professional development were likely to influence teachers' views on their self-development. Hence, before seeing what reasons teachers selected for their difficulty or feasibility in developing their pedagogical knowledge of teaching English, it is worth looking into their professional

qualifications at the time of the data collection of the current research and the opportunities they reported as being available for teacher self-development.

7.4.3.1 Professional qualification of the sample

Table 4.1.10 (appendix-4) presented the professional qualifications of the teachers in low and high-performing schools respectively. According to the Table in both samples, teachers in high-performing schools were more likely to have a teaching certificate than those in low-performing schools. This indicated that they were trained teachers of English. The qualification from the National Colleges of Education (NCOE) was acquired by more teachers in high-performing (ten out of twenty-five) than the teachers in low-performing schools (five out of thirty-seven). However, the number of teachers with no teaching qualification was very high among the teachers in low-performing schools compared to the teachers in high-performing schools; fifteen teachers in low-performing and two teachers in high-performing schools had no professional qualification at the time of the data collection of the current research. A lack of qualified teachers for teaching English is found to be a constant problem in Sri Lankan state schools especially in small and rural schools (Stolyarova, 2011; Liyanage, 2013) which are more likely to be in rural areas.

7.4.3.2 Opportunities available for teacher self-development

As presented in chapter three (3.4.1.2) apart from the conventional pre-service teacher education provided by the NCOE and the in-service teacher development programme provided by the Teachers Training Colleges (TTC), the only regular and freely available teacher development opportunities for teachers are seminars and workshops conducted by the Department of Education (Wijesekera, *ibid.*) periodically on weekends which are difficult for teachers with family commitments to attend. Sometimes the NGOs such as the British Council or the German Agency for Technical Co-operation (GTZ) under their educational projects conduct free seminars for English teachers with the collaboration of the Department of Education (DoE). These seminars are normally held in urban

schools and as a result the consideration given for teachers from remote schools to attend the seminars is ignored. However, the opportunities for pedagogical development which teachers' can easily afford or conveniently access during their leisure time are not available in the district of Jaffna.

Few teachers in high-performing schools spoke in the interviews (Table: 5.4.3/appendix-5) about the lack of opportunities for professional development for teachers in Jaffna. Jaffna was the most badly hit district by the civil war in Sri Lanka. Just as the education of children was badly affected during the war so too was the professional development of teachers. With the end of the war in 2009 things started changing gradually. However, as the teachers in high-performing schools mentioned in the interview, apart from teacher education centres such as the Teacher Training Colleges, National Colleges of Education and universities, centres or programmes for further professional development for teachers are not available and this is possibly a great disadvantage for teachers in updating their pedagogical knowledge (see also 7.4.3.3).

Compared to other districts, in our Jaffna district there are no opportunities for teacher development because of the war. It's really detrimental to them in their professional development (HPS-8).

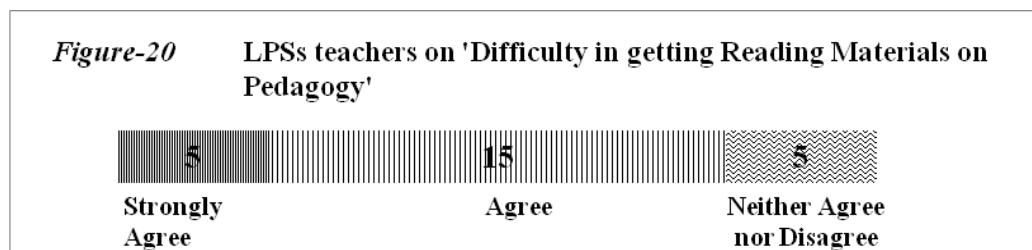
However, two teachers expressed similar views on the failure of the system in making use of the local resources. One of them said referring to some retired teachers of English who were well known for their English linguistic and professional knowledge in the Jaffna context, 'You know, Jaffna has so many famous teachers. Why [does] the department not encourage them to write something on English teaching?' (LPS-9).

7.4.3.3 Factors that hindered pedagogical development

According to the questionnaire data (Tables: 4.3.6L and 4.3.6H/appendix-4), the lack of resources (more specifically reading materials) was found to be an important factor, which hindered the self-development of teachers in pedagogical knowledge. According to the interview data (Tables 5.4.4 and 5.4.5/appendix-5), the teachers identified that the unequal opportunities and the lack of quality of the continuous professional development seminars and workshops affected their pedagogical developments. The following sections discuss these issues.

i. *Lack of pedagogical resources*

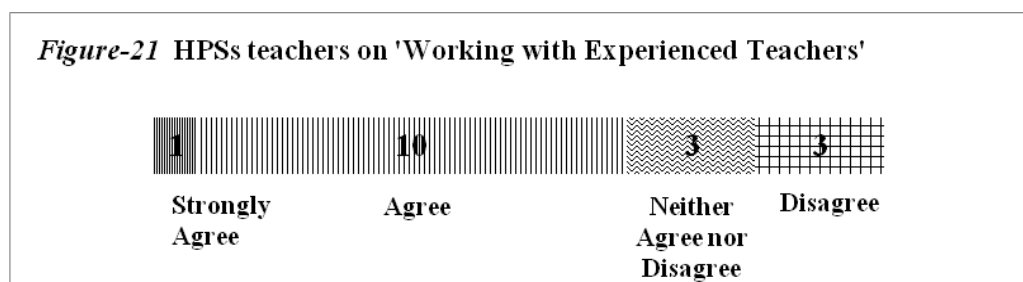
The majority of the teachers in low-performing schools (twenty out of twenty-five) who reported in the questionnaire (Table: 4.3.6L/appendix-4) that they could not develop their pedagogical knowledge of English selected the reason: *difficulty in getting relevant reading materials*. According to **figure-20** fifteen teachers agreed and five teachers strongly agreed that they had difficulties in getting the necessary resources to develop their pedagogical knowledge.



The interview participants both in low and high-performing schools (Table: 5.4.3/appendix-5) agreed that they were able to access a huge number of articles online on pedagogical issues, however being authored by western writers, they did not effectively address the local needs of teachers and students of the current research.

ii. *Unequal opportunities for teachers*

The majority of the teachers in high-performing schools (eleven out of seventeen) who agreed that they could develop their pedagogical knowledge selected the reason that they were teaching with experienced colleagues in their respective schools. According to **figure-21** ten teachers agreed and a single teacher strongly agreed that working with experienced colleagues helped them develop their pedagogical knowledge.



Since all the teachers in high-performing schools were teaching in prestigious 1AB and National Schools, they were likely to have the opportunity to work with teachers with many years of teaching experience. Those experienced teachers can be the source of insight and new ideas for young teachers in relation to pedagogical development. However, the teachers in low-performing schools expressed their views in the interview that they rarely get opportunities to work with colleagues in their schools if they teach in Type II or 1C schools and are deprived of the support of senior teachers.

Another source of unequal opportunity for the teachers in low-performing schools was sometimes that they were unable to attend certain workshops if they were conducted during school hours. In such situations they were not able to attend such seminars as there were no additional teachers to substitute for them so that their usual lessons would be covered during their absence, as illustrated by the teacher comment below:

Recently there was a one-week seminar conducted by the British Council. I really wanted to attend it because it was very useful. My principal said ok but he also said that it was difficult to find a substitute to cover my lessons in my absence. Eventually for the sake of my students I myself avoided that seminar (LP-3).

In contrast the high-performing schools generally had sufficient human force that they could manage to keep the usual lessons running with the help of other teachers, which allowed them to attend continuous professional development seminars/sessions.

iii. The quality of seminars/workshops

According to interview participants (Tables 5.4.3 and 5.4.5/appendix-5), on the one hand, opportunities for pedagogical development appeared limited and on the other hand, the quality of the available opportunities tended to be unsatisfactory. Suntharesan (2012) found that the teachers in Jaffna were provided with regular seminars on how to utilise the textbook effectively. However, the opinion of the teachers in high and low-performing schools was that the local resource persons who conducted seminars did not introduce any new ideas of pedagogy but rather repeated the old ideas again and again.

As far as my students are concerned what I get in the seminar is ok for me, but I don't get any new ideas. They repeat the same old things and we follow them (LPS-7).

A view of a senior teacher (HPS-6) was about the retired teachers of English in Jaffna.

I have been attending seminars in the department so many years but I see no varieties in resource persons. In this matter they can't blame the government. I don't know...I wonder why can't these people plan things properly? ... For example there are so many retired teachers here. ...because you can see our (current) teachers know better than the resource persons. There are retired teachers with excellent teaching experiences. They can provide better seminars than these people (resource persons).

Many teachers from both low and high-performing schools said that seminars by the Department of Education (DoE) were conducted just for the sake of formality. They said that the DoE did not have proper plans or effective English programmes but simply conducted the number of seminars just to utilize the funds allocated for seminars by the provincial Ministry of Education (MoE).

An important view expressed by some teachers in low-performing schools was that sometimes the seminars were not suitable for them as they dealt with below average students. They said that seminars were conducted commonly for teachers in low and high-performing schools and they failed to address specific needs of the former in relation to their students.

Sometimes it is very frustrating that those who conduct seminars simply ignore problems related to us (LPSs) and explain things in the context of big schools like... (he mentioned names of a few HPSs) (LPS-11).

While teachers were critical about the quality of seminars and workshops conducted by the DoE, those teachers who could attend the seminars rarely conducted by the British Council or the German Agency for Technical Co-operation (GTZ) seemed to be impressed. They viewed such seminars as more productive and effective as they said,

Once I got a chance to attend a seminar by the British Council. I was able to know many new things within a short period of time (LPS-12).

They were really effective and interesting, not like our local seminars (HPS-8).

The views of the teachers here was that the seminars by the British Council were effective as they were not repetitive in content or approach like the seminars conducted by the officials in the Department of Education. They also said that the seminars by the British Council taught them how to keep the students active and interested through games and pair activities in the classroom.

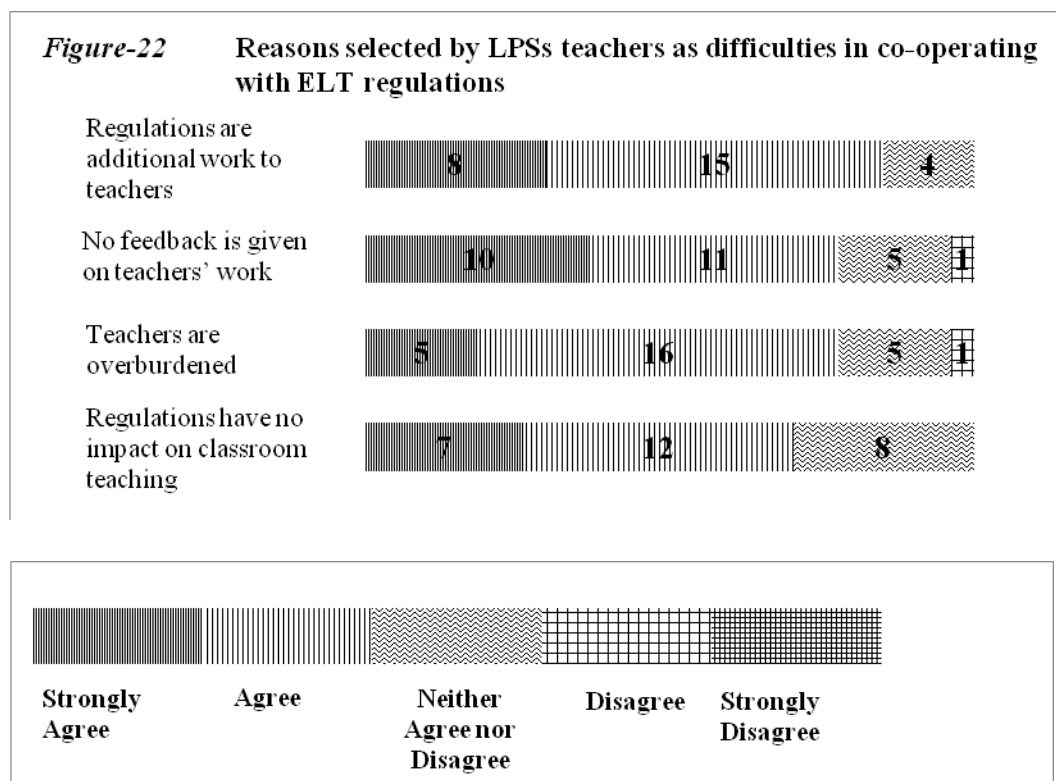
According to the views of the teachers above, though they identified certain issues in relation to their professional development such as the lack of resources, unequal opportunities to attend seminars/workshops and lack of quality, an important thought that ran through their views was the inefficiency of the educational authorities in addressing those issues so that they could provide better professional development to the teachers.

7.5 Problems in co-operating with English language teaching regulations

The resource personnel in the interview sessions of the preliminary study had suggested that teachers of English could observe the regulations (*Table 33/Chapter Six*) implemented by the Department of English in order to keep their English classroom teaching effective. Hence the final question of the teachers' questionnaire and the fifth question in the interview session asked the teachers about their co-operation with the English language teaching (ELT) regulations and any difficulties which they experienced.

7.5.1 Co-operation with ELT regulations

According to the questionnaire data (Table 4.3.7L/appendix-4), twenty-seven out of thirty-seven teachers in low-performing schools found it difficult to co-operate with the ELT regulations. **Figure-22** shows that the majority of those twenty-seven teachers in low-performing schools chose four out of five reasons given in the questionnaire.



Twenty-three teachers (fifteen agreed and eight strongly agreed) chose the reason *the regulations are additional work* (Rosenholtz and Simpson, 1990) to their teaching, twenty-one teachers (eleven agreed and ten strongly agreed) selected the reason *no feedback is given on teachers' work*, again twenty-one teachers (sixteen agreed and five strongly agreed) chose the reason *teachers are overburdened by various tasks* (Smethem, 2007; Thornton et al., 2002) and nineteen teachers (twelve agreed and seven strongly agreed) selected the reason *the regulations have no impact on classroom teaching* (Newmann, Rutter and Smith, 1989). Given the numbers of the teachers who chose these four reasons, it is obvious that

there was little difference in the strength of feeling about these four views from the perspectives of teachers in low-performing schools.

In the case of the teachers in high-performing schools, the questionnaire data (Table 4.3.7H/appendix-4) revealed that nineteen out of twenty-five teachers in high-performing schools reported that they did not find it difficult to co-operate with the regulations of the Department of Education (DoE). However, according to the data sixteen of them selected the reason that the regulations were only helpful to them to become more organized in their teaching rather than being effective. Only five teachers reported that those regulations were helpful in their teaching. Hence, though the majority of the teachers in high-performing schools said that they did not find it difficult to co-operate with the regulations of the DoE, they did not suggest that those regulations were helpful to them to be effective in their teaching. This is supported by their comments on the regulations of the DoE. Seventeen teachers in high-performing schools commented (Table 4.4.7H/appendix-4) that they did not receive any feedback on the work they performed and eleven teachers in high-performing schools commented that the regulations had no impact on the quality of their teaching.

Among many working conditions which are related to the performance of teachers, two conditions such as job design characteristics and feedback (Ali and Aroosiya, 2012) seemed to be connected to two of the reasons given by the teachers above: *the regulations have no impact on classroom teaching* and *no feedback is given on teachers' work*. Meaningful work is more likely to increase teachers' motivation than the work that is meaningless (Michaelson et al., 2014). The majority of the teachers in low and high-performing schools found that certain English language teaching regulations, particularly writing the lesson plan and conducting the lessons in the 5E method or conducting school based assessment for students in low-performing schools, were meaningless as they considered those regulations irrelevant to their teaching context (this is discussed more below). Meaningful feedback on teachers' work or performance from their colleagues or principals seemed to help these teachers identify and meet the goals in teaching (Petchprasert, 2012). However, the teachers reported in the

questionnaire that no feedback, especially on the lesson plan, was given by any competent personnel. Further, the additional work or overburden in the teaching context as teachers reported in the questionnaire is more likely to reduce teachers' motivation in their work and lead them to quit the profession (Smethem, 2007; Thornton et al., 2002).

In the interviews, the teachers both in low and high-performing schools expressed their views mainly on two issues regarding the English language teaching (ELT) regulations: the irrelevancy and impracticality of the ELT regulations to their teaching contexts. Besides these, the majority of the teachers in low-performing and a few teachers in high-performing schools found the frustration they underwent in their profession affected their willingness to co-operate with ELT regulations. The following sections analyse and discuss these problems.

7.5.1.1 Irrelevant and impractical ELT regulations

The teachers considered that certain ELT regulations were irrelevant or impractical to their teaching contexts (Tables: 5.5.2 and 5.5.3/appendix-5). The teachers in low-performing schools said that they could not implement their lesson plan, which they prepared in the 5E method as their students in most cases were not good even in basic English knowledge and they wanted to teach them in simple ways. They said that their students' standard was so low that they were not even aware of the meaning of 'E's (Engagement, Exploration, Explanation, Elaboration and Evaluation) in the 5E method. A teacher in a low-performing school said,

How can they (authorities) expect us to teach English in 5E method? They (students) struggle to make a simple sentence in English and how can I expect them to explain and elaborate something in English? All my students need to learn something useful every day in the most simple and friendly way (LPS-7).

The attitude of the teacher above appeared to have revealed his high sense of efficacy which made him decide what was suitable or beneficial to his students learning English (Rosenholtz and Simpson, 1990) and his commitment to exert efforts for students in low-performing schools (Kushman, 1992).

In the case of teachers in high-performing schools, their students' standard of English was sufficient enough for a lesson to be conducted in the 5E method. However, they said that writing the lesson plan was irrelevant as they did not receive any feedback on it from their principals or subject co-ordinator or in-service advisors which was likely to prevent them from meeting the goals in teaching (Petchprasert, 2012). Further two senior teachers in high-performing schools (in informal conversation during the lesson observations) shared their views from the information and experience they gathered from their colleagues teaching in other schools. They said that teachers in all the schools wrote their lesson plan in the 5E method and in certain schools students were arranged to sit in groups in order to fulfil the requirement of the Department of Education but in reality teaching took place in the traditional lecture method, because the 5E method which originated in the West could not fit into their local context unless the method was adapted to suit the context. They stated that a number of problems such as the large number of students, congested classrooms, lack of resources, limited duration for the lesson, mismatches between the textbook and different stages of the 5E method and above all students' poor knowledge of English made this instructional method impossible. Although it was not possible to substantiate these informal claims, the researcher observed in the preliminary study that none of the thirty-four observed lessons was conducted in the 5E method (a. of 6.2.2.1/Chapter Six).

Though the teachers in low and high-performing schools said that their lesson plan in the 5E method was irrelevant to their teaching contexts, a few senior teachers in low-performing schools had the idea that teachers could gain some insights for their teaching when they wrote their lesson plan in the 5E method or at least in some form of method. A senior teacher in a low-performing school said,

I know writing the lesson plan in 5E method is difficult. But teachers should realise that they cannot simply get fine ideas for teaching in the classroom as they open the textbook. When you reflect and write your plan you will get some new ideas (LPS-3).

The same teacher also said that teachers should learn to do simple things suitable for their students instead of blaming the problems which were always there in the teaching context.

Regarding the school based assessments (SBAs) the teachers in low-performing schools said that though the SBA was a good system to encourage students to update what they learn, they were not benefitting from the scores they obtained, as they did not add to their final performance in the public examination.

I wonder what is the use of spending our time on the SBAs if the marks, which we give to students are not included in the final exam. We simply waste our time (LPS-7).

In the interview a teacher in a high-performing school clearly explained how SBAs turned out to be impractical or irrelevant in her teaching context. The current textbooks for English as a second language in Sri Lanka are based on competencies. Every unit of the textbook introduces at the beginning the competencies the students are going to learn in that particular unit. However inside the unit, there are no indications whatsoever whether this text teaches this particular competency or that activity teaches that particular competency. Hence teachers are not bothered about explicitly teaching this or that competency, but they just go through the texts and do the activities as they appear. This was confirmed during the lesson observation (b of 6.2.2.1/Chapter Six) in the preliminary study. In none of the observed lessons teachers said to the students that they would learn this or that competency or explicitly taught a particular competency. Teachers were just reading the text, explaining it and helping the students to do the activities. A teacher said,

Sometimes it is really funny. The textbook says about some kind of competencies but the level of the students is somewhere far behind the competency of the lesson. (LPS-9).

This is consistent with the finding of Perera et al. (2010) whose research explored the heterogeneity of students through material adaptation in Sri Lanka. They found that some competencies in a particular textbook were not suitable to

the students who were using the textbook. The problem arises when teachers prepare the school based assessments (SBAs) for students. According to the regulations they have to prepare them on different competencies but neither the teachers (in my study) taught competencies nor did the students learn them explicitly. According to what interviewed teachers said they just conducted an assessment and entered it under the name of a particular competency. The above teacher (LPS-9) continued to say,

[in such a situation] we are just helpless. We just conduct some tests ... spelling or reading or reciting a poem and then enter the marks under some competency.

This kind of situation fits into what Ball (2003: 221 in Maguire 2010: 62) says, 'commitment, judgement and authenticity within practice are sacrificed at the altar of measurable outcomes'. The saddest part of SBAs according to a teacher who taught in one of the most prestigious National Schools in Jaffna is teachers' workload, their stress regarding completing the syllabus and a lack of satisfaction with the use of SBAs as this resulted in some teachers entering scores without conducting any SBAs. One teacher said:

I know there are teachers who simply enter some marks without doing any SBAs because they have [a] deadline to finish the SBAs (HPS-3).

A teacher (LPS-10) expressed a view on the SBA which supported the views of other teachers that SBAs were irrelevant to their teaching contexts,

We say, it is the school based assessment, but always based on the expectations of the department. You see...I don't know, I may be wrong but what I think is that it should be based on the needs, contexts, resources and ...mmmm situations of the school. Then I think it will be better for students and teachers [who] also can feel [they are] doing something meaningful.

Another teacher expressed a similar view, not particularly on school based assessments but the English language teaching (ELT) regulations in general,

The Ministry [of Education] introduces many things without any adaptation. I think this way that if they suggest these things as guidelines and instruct us to implement them according to our contexts, then our children can benefit a lot. Our department people or provincial department people, they should take the initiatives, because you see there is a vast gap between the Ministry [of Education] people and the local teachers. Actually they don't know what we undergo in the field (HPS-4).

While teachers spoke about the inappropriateness of the ELT regulations, they also expressed the responsibility of the educational authorities to address the issues in order to make the regulations suitable to the various teaching contexts.

7.5.1.2 Lack of intrinsic motivation of teachers

The intrinsic motivation of teachers is likely to be affected by negative emotions such as frustration and anger (Sutton and Wheatly, 2003). According to the interview participants (Table 5.5.4/appendix-5), their lack of intrinsic motivation was another important problem which prevented the teachers from fulfilling the ELT regulations. In the interviews more teachers in low-performing than high-performing schools (nine teachers in low and three teachers in high-performing schools) expressed views and opinions, which could be associated with their lack of intrinsic motivation in teaching. According to them their motivation was affected by means such as:

- the lack of encouragement or appreciation for teachers from principals or educational authorities
- not recognizing the hard work of the teachers in low-performing schools with their students while praising the teachers in high-performing schools
- lack of support for teachers from the schools when they are overloaded with work
- treating the teachers as wage servants
- demanding lots of work without providing necessary resources
- unreasonable expectations without considering the low standard of students
- comparing the results of the students in low-performing schools with their counterparts in high-performing schools and
- making the teachers in low-performing schools embarrassed in front of their counterparts in high-performing schools.

Studies (Howard and Johnson, 2004, Fisher, 201; Flook et al., 2013) identified similar issues expressed by the teachers above, as causing teachers to become stressed and to burnout in teaching. Edelwich and Brodsky (1980 in Farber, 1984) state that teachers experienced burnout when there was no recognition or appreciation or reward despite their hard work. These findings were reflected in teacher comments in my study such as:

They don't realise how much we struggle with the students besides our family problems, stress, other duties and work in the school and the department work etc. After all these things they would simply say that we are not working enough (LPS-1).

Teacher burnout occurs when there are high demands from the administration without providing necessary resources or putting professional support in place (Hakanen, Bakker and Schaufeli, 2005). Experiences of administrative demands and a lack of support were recounted in this study. For example,

We are ready to work hard because we really want our children to improve but the sad thing is that the school administration or the department sometimes expect us to do everything without giving us any support or co-operation (LPS-5).

Public criticism of teachers is another reason why teachers undergo stress and burnout in their career (Alshuler, 1990, Henrickson, 1979, Lortie, 1975 in Faber, 1984).

After the O/L exam, until the results are out the teachers have real tension because in the department meeting, they will ask us to stand and comment on our students' results. It is a real stress and frustration because all the teachers from other leading schools will be there in the hall. It is really embarrassing when our exam results are compared with the results of other big schools (LPS-6).

What the teacher said above about their students' performance being compared with that of those in leading schools supports the argument of Ball (2003 in Perryman et al. *ibid.*) that in the performative education systems '...judgements are made according to the productivity of colleagues, rather than their personal worth' (p. 185). Further the aspect of tension of teachers regarding the O/L

results of students resembles the stress of teachers caused by league tables in schools in England (Perryman et al. *ibid.*).

A few teachers in high-performing schools expressed their frustration, which appeared to be more related to teacher workload (Barmby, 2006; Smethem, 2007) and lack of encouragement for teacher professional development (Rosenholtz and Simpson, 1990).

Sometimes it is really frustrating that the school doesn't care about the teachers...they don't see how much work we do, but are more concerned about the exam results (HPS-6).

Normally the school principals don't encourage the teachers to do some higher studies. They just want us to work like bulls (HPS-8).

From what the teachers expressed, it is possible to argue that some teachers can become unmotivated in such situations and their efforts to be good teachers of English is likely to be affected. Lack of motivation in teaching not only led some teachers to report a lack of interest in cooperating with English language teaching (ELT) regulations, but also as Perryman et al. (*ibid.*) found led to a lack of creativity in teaching.

7.5.2 Attitude of teachers towards fulfilling the ELT regulations

When teachers found the regulations (2.2.2.3/Chapter Two) of the Department of Education (DoE) impractical or irrelevant but were unable to avoid them as they were implemented by the highest authoritative body of the education system, it seemed to imply that they had no option other than complying with them. The attitude of teachers towards fulfilling the ELT issues was generally found to be the attitude of doing something for the sake of doing it (Table 5.5.5/appendix-5). The teachers both in low and high-performing schools expressed that they followed the instructions of the DoE just to keep some record of what they did because that was what the officials primarily needed. They said that the Ministry of Education introduced many things in the past, but failed to evaluate their implications for the lives of the students and work of the teachers.

Many things we do; notes of lesson or SBA or some evaluation of students' performance etc. We are expected to show evidence of all these things when the department team comes. They just check and go but [are] not bothered about if they were really useful for students, (...). They just want things to happen (LPS-5).

I have been teaching more than thirty years. The ministry introduced so many things but just for the sake of doing things. Every government introduced new things for their own glory but they rarely had real interest in students and teachers (LPS-1).

Regarding the lesson plan the teachers in low-performing schools said that they were writing it for the sake of fulfilling their duty only, because probably first of all they knew that they could not implement it fully in the classroom as the 5E method was considered not suitable to their contexts and secondly, they knew that the authorities concerned would not inspect whether their lessons were conducted according to the lesson plan.

I should accept that I write the notes of lesson but don't use it in the classroom, because nobody gives any feedback on it and supervise my lesson. I feel my own way of teaching my lesson is more useful to my students (LPS-11).

A teacher in a low-performing school gave some insight about the lesson plan as follows,

I will not say that notes of lesson is [an] utter useless thing, because I can go to the class at least with some ideas, but the thing is that we don't use it fully,...They [DoE officials] should consider the local classroom context and propose some suitable style for notes of [the] lesson...(LPS-9).

The teachers in low and high-performing schools said that because of the expectations of the Department of Education (DoE) the teachers appeared to have the attitude of finishing the syllabus at any cost. They said that the DoE was more concerned about the percentage of students' success in the examination than the real development of students i.e. 'focusing on teaching rather than learning' (Maguire, 2010:61); such expectation is likely to result in some teachers not being bothered about the effectiveness of their lesson preparation or the lesson delivery, and be more concerned about finishing the textbook for the sake of completing it.

Teachers felt that their school principal too did not want to raise their concerns about the difficulties which teachers faced in fulfilling the regulations of the DoE, but instead wanted the teachers not to create trouble between the school

administration and the DoE by not fulfilling the regulations laid down by the latter. Such an absence of support and leadership from principals (Day, 2008) at the expense of teachers' interests can easily affect the motivation of the latter as illustrated below:

There was a time when our principals really spoke for teachers. But now I don't understand why they do like this. They openly say to teachers that "the [department] team will come tomorrow and get everything ready and don't put me into trouble". So teachers also do things without real purpose (LPS-7).

It is frustrating sometimes that the school administration is more concerned about the demands of the department than teachers' problems (HPS-8).

However there were exceptions. Two teachers in high-performing schools said that the involvement of the DoE with their schools was far less compared with other schools and consequently they did not write the lesson plan in the way the DoE wanted, and teachers had the freedom to follow their own way in preparing the lesson. One said,

The output is very important. Exam results are very important to the principal. He has openly said to the department people not to 'disturb our programme' (HPS-2).

The rationale behind this exceptional case was that this particular school was producing very high pass rates in the public examinations. It is possible to contend that the DoE had less involvement in this school because it is a high-performing school with consistent high results and therefore the DoE could afford to carry out fewer inspections to ensure the teachers were writing the lesson plan as required. However, the DoE would possibly argue that greater intervention was required in the low-performing schools, in the same way that Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education)¹⁵ inspectors carry out more inspections in schools with unsatisfactory ratings in England (Ofsted online, nd).

15. Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills in the United Kingdom. The office inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people, and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages.

7.6 Teachers' views on their own English teaching efficacy

The aspects of English teaching efficacy considered in the current research were determined from the information given by the principals, retired teachers of English and resource personnel of English language teaching (ELT) in the preliminary study. However, the research would be incomplete if it did not report the views of the current teachers of English on their personal English teaching efficacy. Hence, the final question in the interview session asked the teachers about their own sense of English teaching efficacy.

7.6.1 English teaching efficacy by teachers in low-performing schools

7.6.1.1 Eliciting desire in students towards English

For many teachers in the low-performing schools the aspect of English teaching efficacy was to elicit some desire in their students toward learning English (Table 5.6.1/appendix-5). Eliciting students' desire can be interpreted as motivating them (Al-Khairi, 2013; Dorneyi, 2010 in Bahous et al., 2011). The teachers said that so many things such as the low socio-economic state of their parents, lack of encouragement or support at home to learn English, and lack of proper foundation in English in primary schools contributed to the lack of desire among students to learn English. According to the teachers in the low-performing schools, the first step for success in ELT was to make students like the subject. To achieve this purpose they approached their students in a friendly manner without imposing too much beyond their capacity. Two stated:

For me, effective teaching is to make my students like the subject first. Only when he (sic) likes the subject he will concentrate in the class and make some efforts to learn it on his own (LPS-7).

I always approach my students with friendly manner. If they hate you, then they will hate your subject. That way I try to make the lesson effective (LPS-9).

This aspect of teaching efficacy that the interview teachers practised here seemed to be informed by what the interviewed retired teachers, principals and resource personnel in the preliminary study expected of them, i.e., delivering interesting

lessons in the classroom. Though both the interview participants in the preliminary and the teachers in the main study spoke about the same aspects, the latter considered it in a more practical and comprehensive way than the former; while the former spoke about making particular lessons interesting the latter spoke about making the whole language programme a pleasant experience by approaching the students with a friendly and understanding manner. A view of a senior teacher in low-performing school explains this more clearly,

Earlier you asked about teaching interesting lessons. I think now I can answer that question with more meaning. To give interesting lessons of course, as I said before there are lots of problems; no proper input in the classroom, no computer...not even a tape recorder and so on. But still I teach interesting lessons. I mean, for my students English is not a subject, which they hate. They really love to learn. ... Everything is in the hands of the teacher. I speak to them friendly, say some jokes, sometimes I even sing, sometimes I tell them a story. But one thing is important, some or other way I teach them something new from the book every day. This is effective teaching. Making a particular lesson interesting is one thing but making them like the whole subject is another thing. I do the second thing (LPS-3).

To achieve this, many teachers in low-performing schools considered *friendliness*, a personal trait-related characteristic (Wichadee, 2010; Chen, 2012) as an important aspect. What they meant by 'friendliness' can be seen from their statements below, which resembled the aspects of kindness, patience, lenience, understanding and support as explained by Chen (ibid.):

...because you need to be kind to them... you see they don't know even so many simple things in English, so you should not scold them, 'you don't know this or you don't know that'. But you should try to understand their problems (LPS-7).

I think we have to be more patient with them. With real attitude ofmmmm helping them, you have to instruct certain things repeatedly. That's important (LPS-9).

You cannot be a strict person in the classroom showing a rough face always. You have to approach them as children (LPS-3).

The views of the above teachers and of others reveal that each of them had some kind of desire in them in order to elicit a desire in their students towards learning

English. It has been argued that ‘without desire, teaching becomes arid and empty. It loses its meaning’ (Hargreaves, 1994: 12 in Ball, 1999: 27). Though teachers are reconstructed in the context of globalisation as Maguire (2010) says, they are always ‘context-dependent’ and hence ‘produced out of local histories, cultures and politics’ (p. 58). In the current study it was evident that educational reform in Sri Lanka and emphasis on student performance as argued by Ball (1999) had led to teachers **in Jaffna struggling to find their own soul**.

From my analysis of the processes of educational reform, it is difficult not to conclude that political enthusiasm for accountability and competition are threatening both to destroy the meaningfulness of “authentic” teaching and profoundly change what it means “to teach” and to be a teacher. The global trends of school improvement and effectiveness, performativity and management are working together to eliminate emotion and desire from teaching – rendering the teachers’ soul transparent but empty (pp. 28-29).

7.6.1.2 Teaching only what students could understand and grasp

Some senior teachers in low-performing schools said that in delivering an effective English lesson teachers needed to decide on a simple but useful thing that could be learned from the day’s lesson (Table 5.6.1/appendix-5). They said that the students in both low and high-performing schools followed the same textbook and thus they could not expect that their students would understand everything from the textbook as the students in high-performing schools did; teachers should know the level of their students and hence could decide what they could understand from a particular lesson and how easily that knowledge could be transmitted (Neil, 1991; Wichadee, *ibid*) to them during the short period of the lesson.

I consider my lesson effective when I identify at least one or two things from a particular text and explain them simply so that they understand and learn something new (LPS-10).

I know the problems of my students. So I go through the lesson and decide what they can easily grasp from the lesson and concentrate only on them (LPS-2).

This aspect of effectiveness that these teachers spoke about is what the interview participants in the preliminary study expected of them, i.e., knowing what students

really need to learn and delivering that. In the questionnaire and interview the teachers in both low and high-performing schools reported that it was difficult to consider students' needs and likes as they have to follow the textbook according to the scheme of work. However, here in this section the teachers in low-performing schools instead of considering what their students really need to learn, they seemed to consider what they can really understand from a particular lesson and taught them in simple ways hoping that some of their needs and likes would be fulfilled. From this it can be argued that the teachers acted in a more practical and comprehensive way; they cannot avoid the textbook and therefore by considering student's capacity they use the textbook efficiently.

7.6.1.3 Taking bold decisions for the sake of students

The senior teacher (LPS-3) who gave an extensive explanation above regarding eliciting students' desire in the English subject said that teachers should be bold enough to reject certain things which are not suitable to their students and have the courage to implement what is relevant and useful for their students (Table 5.6.1/appendix-5). The idea of this teacher is consistent with that of Rosenholtz and Simpson (1990) who said that the high sense of efficacy, which is the sign of commitment enables teachers to make important instructional decisions in order to provide a suitable learning experience to their students. She said that students in low-performing schools were generally from low socio-economic family backgrounds and had limited opportunities to learn English outside the classroom and hence the teacher in the school was the only source of learning English for most of them; therefore teachers should do justice to such students by giving them a better learning experience. The view of this teacher further brings in the idea that teachers need to think 'critically about practice' (Maguire, 2010: 61). This teacher also said that a teacher should have the courage to confront the authorities to defend her cause.

I already said this. I do only what is useful to my students and on few occasions I confronted the authorities. Because only we know what problems our students undergo. So we have to decide certain things (LPS-3).

Two other senior teachers in low-performing schools (LPS-7 and LPS-12) also had the same view that teachers should give priority to what is really beneficial to their students and be able to answer the authorities regarding what they teach. This is consistent with the views of the teachers in Perryman et al. (ibid.) who had a kind of ‘picking and choosing’ method as they were not ready to implement issues, which they did not believe in, issues which they considered too rigid and dogmatic.

7.6.1.4 Co-operation of the educational authorities with teachers to be effective in teaching

According to the data the majority of the teachers in the low-performing schools tended to have the opinion (Table 5.6.1/appendix-5) that conducting effective lessons was possible if the educational authorities co-operated with them by not insisting on certain regulations strictly. The teachers said that they have effective ideas and plans to conduct interesting lessons, but they were unable to implement such ideas because of certain expectations of the authorities. For example they said,

I have been teaching English for many years, it is not difficult for me to deliver interesting lessons to students. But the problem is we have to cover the textbook according to the scheme. So we just go through the book (LPS-9).

If the department allows us to teach what our students actually lack or need ...we can do a lot to our students. But what they want us to do is to just finish the textbook....We just go on simply reading the book and doing the activities and at the end the students gain a very little (LPS-11).

From what the teachers in low-performing schools expressed, it is possible to conclude that they were unable to implement certain decisions in the classroom because of the expectations of the educational authorities for them to follow the curriculum in the first place. Like a few senior teachers in the previous section, they did not report if they attempted anything useful for the students to learn English in the classroom and consequently faced any repercussions from the educational authorities. It seems that they were under the impression that the educational authorities were strict with the curriculum and hence they had to follow the textbook in the first place without doing anything different to fulfil students’ needs.

However, some other opinions the teachers expressed regarding certain issues arguably demanded the co-operation of the educational authorities with the teachers to be more effective in their English teaching, as expressed by two teachers in low-performing schools:

Last time when the department team came to the school, they showed the last year O/L results. As you know our school pass rate is very low....But they said next year we should try to make it over sixty per-cent. You see, they don't really realise what they are actually speaking....They don't simply see the actual level of the students but just say what they like to say (LPS-7).

During the team visit the department people wrote in the record book that we don't conduct the lesson in 5E method because the students are not arranged in groups. The next day the principal ordered us to change the classroom set up and we did. But we still teach the lesson in the old style. The truth is our students are too low to follow the lessons in 5E method but these people don't understand this properly and want to do something for formality (LPS-10).

Though it is not guaranteed from what the teachers said that they would deliver effective English lessons to the students if the educational authorities did not demand impractical things from them, it can be concluded that certain demands of the educational authorities discouraged the teachers when they found them to be not beneficial to their students. Hence, the general opinion of the teachers reflected an expectation that the educational authorities had to co-operate with them to be more effective in their teaching, rather than they demanded the teacher's co-operation with the English language teaching regulations, which they considered were not beneficial to their students.

7.6.2 English teaching efficacy by teachers in high-performing schools

The teachers in high-performing schools identified that speaking to their students in English in order to increase their communicative competence was an effective way of teaching the language. Some teachers also expressed that making students autonomous in learning was an effective way of teaching English (Table: 5.6.1/appendix-5).

7.6.2.1 Enhancing students' communicative competence

Some teachers in high-performing schools said that having formal and informal conversations with their students both inside and outside the classroom was an effective way of teaching the language. This is consistent with what the teachers in the literature reviewed endorsed as the content of effective second language teaching (Brosh, 1996; Park and Lee, 2006; Brown, 2009). In the preliminary study the language need that was expressed by the highest number of students in high-performing schools (sixty-nine out of 147) was practicing speaking (Figure 8/Chapter Six). The teachers too realised that their speaking skills needed improvement as the current curriculum only helped them to develop reading and writing skills. Hence they helped their students to develop their English language skills by speaking to them in English whenever circumstances were available in the school environment outside the classroom.

I always try to speak to my students in English both in and outside the classroom. Most of the time they don't find it difficult to understand but they tend to switch onto Tamil after one or two sentences. I keep on trying (HPS-7).

Previously in this chapter a finding of the lesson observation referred to was that even though the students in high-performing schools had more ability than the students in low-performing schools to respond to their teachers in English the student talk was much less in the classroom as they were more engaged with the textbook. According to the views of the teachers, they tried to compensate for this by speaking to students in English outside the classroom whenever possible. As effective teachers they put into practice one of the macro strategies proposed by Kumaravadivelu (1992) i.e., 'contextualising linguistic input' (p. 41). The study of Brown (2009) also states that effective teaching integrates grammar practices with real-world contexts. Further, the views of the teachers in high-performing schools of the current study also reflected a consistency with those of the Sri Lankan studies conducted by Karunaratne (2008) and Perera (2001) that verbal interaction between teachers and students needs to be increased in Sri Lankan classrooms.

Some teachers in high-performing schools found that the English day competitions were a more effective means to improve their students' communicative competence.

I always encourage my students to take part in competitions especially in orations, because I believe that when they memorise and repeat something, it will induce them to open their mouth and speak in real situations (HPS-6).

The teachers also said that when students participated in competitions, besides developing their speaking skills they also came to know new things such as distinctive pronunciation, creativity in writing and knowledge about literature. Here, when teachers encouraged students to develop their communicative competence and further their English knowledge through English-day competitions they exercised the aspect of English teaching efficacy that was to know students' real learning needs or likes and to fulfil them.

7.6.2.2 Making students autonomous in learning

Learner autonomy has been developed as an important area in foreign language teaching/learning. Holec (1981: 3 in Borg, 2012: 4) defines learner autonomy as 'the ability to take charge of one's learning ... to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning'. A few teachers in high-performing schools said that the effectiveness of their teaching depends on how much efforts students make to learn the language on their own. They said that their students did not need as much help as students in low-performing schools; they could easily understand the textbook and do the activities. They also said that if students became autonomous learners teachers would not need to rush through the textbook in the classroom, instead they could conduct more relaxed and smooth lessons. Importantly, they said the responsibility for learning lay with the students:

I always encourage them to take care of their own learning because, the textbook is not very difficult for them. I advise them to do the activities and do past exam papers on their own and come to me when they find it difficult (HPS-3).

I normally do the difficult portion of the lesson with students and ask them to study the easier part at home, because we cannot give everything to them. They are not small children and they should learn to search for knowledge on their own (HPS-4).

Part Two: sub-analysis

Part two of this chapter presents the sub-analysis of the main study data in which the relationships between the personal traits of the teachers (such as their gender, teacher qualifications, length of time in the profession and age) and aspects of effective teaching of English (as outlined in the preliminary study by the retired teachers of English, principals and English resource personnel) are discussed. Importantly, this part also presents comparisons of teachers in low and high-performing schools and the interplay of existing problems on teaching efficacy. Further, in the light of Weiner's attribution model (see 1.3.4 in Chapter One) this part discusses how the teachers made their attributions to the difficulties they had in exercising their English teaching efficacy and how the changes in their teaching behaviour motivated them to enhance their teaching efficacy so as to deliver more effective English lessons. It concludes with a chapter summary which brings together the important points of the whole data analysis in relation to the central research question:

How do the teachers of English (in Jaffna) perceive various classroom and other related problems (such as socio-economic and political issues which are connected to the teachers' profession) affected their English teaching efficacy?

The numbering of headings below continues from Part One of this chapter.

7.7 Gender

According to the questionnaire data (Charts 4.1.1 and 4.1.2/appendix-4), in both groups of participants the majority were female: twenty-nine out of thirty-seven teachers in low-performing schools and seventeen out of twenty-five teachers in high-performing schools. A survey on teacher recruitment and teacher mobility in Sri Lankan state schools showed figures for the whole teacher population in 2010: 153,773 female teachers and 62,245 male teachers, making female teachers seventy-one per cent of the whole teacher population (Balasooriya, 2013). Though the survey of Balasooriya (*ibid.*) was about Sri Lankan teachers in general, the questionnaire data of the current research showed the same female

gender tendency among the teachers of English too. The following sections show how the gender differences of the teachers appeared to be associated with a sense of teacher self-efficacy.

7.7.1 Daily lesson preparation and gender differences

According to the teachers' views the difficulties in daily lesson preparation as an aspect of English teaching efficacy could be associated with the gender differences of the teachers especially in relation to their family commitments. Twenty-one out of twenty-four teachers in low-performing schools and eight out of thirteen teachers in high-performing schools who agreed that they had lots of family commitments were female. In the interviews (Table 5.1.1/appendix-5) also more female teachers than male teachers reported that their daily lesson preparation was affected by various family commitments. This finding was similar to that of Hainline (2014) whose study revealed that the female teachers in Texas spent more hours on family duties than the male teachers, but this idea can be easily challenged as the number of female and male teachers in the current study was not proportionate. There were more female teachers than male teachers (see *table 20* of Chapter Five). However, the perceptions of the teachers revealed that the male and female teachers generally had different types of family commitments and these commitments appeared to have an impact on the teachers' sense of efficacy in relation to lesson preparation. For example, the interview data showed that the family commitments of female teachers were various parental duties such as feeding their children, helping them with their homework, doing a variety of other work in the house and sometimes looking after their elderly parents. A female teacher stated,

....there is much work at home with my parents and children.I am taking thirty-five periods a week and when I think of it, it is really a stress. It is really difficult to prepare the lessons effectively (LPS-6).

According to the views of the male teachers, their commitments towards their families were primarily based on earning extra money to support their families by giving private tuitions to students after school. Two of them said,

On many occasions I missed the lesson preparation mainly because I was tired of working in the tuition centre. I know it is not proper to go to the classroom unprepared because of my own tuition, but it is the life problem of many teachers (LPS-9).

....[after school] we run here and there to conduct our extra classes and when we return home we are really tired and unable to do our lesson preparation....if we want to look after our family then we have to do extra work (HPS-6).

However, the same male teachers along with a few other male teachers revealed a particular thought in the interviews that giving extra classes outside school hours was in a way a kind of preparation for the lessons they carried out during school hours. One of the teacher's explained how providing extra lessons became a kind lesson preparation:

You know, normally in the tuition centres we cover the textbook a bit faster than we do in the school, because we have to do a lot of past and model question papers with the students. So you see, when we teach a particular lesson in the school, most of the time we would have already covered it in the tuition (LPS-1).

Hence, while the female teachers did not seem to have such a benefit out of fulfilling their commitments towards their family, the male teachers commitments towards their family indirectly helped with their lesson preparation. Thus, as said above different types of family commitments appeared to have an impact on the teachers' sense of efficacy as to whether they could carry out their lesson preparation.

Tsui and Cheng (ibid.) say that when teachers as breadwinners and parents (as described above) have many responsibilities in their family lives, their teaching will be affected. Day (2008) and Day et al. (2006) highlight good school leadership which helps teachers maintain a work-life balance to keep their teaching efficacy high. However, none of the teachers either in the questionnaire or interviews spoke about the support of the school leadership or the principal in relation to their personal circumstances and problems that affected their teaching or preparation activities. This seems to suggest that the efficacy of the teachers is likely to be at risk due to the lack of concern of the school. Some interview participants expressed views on the lack of concern of their school, not in relation to their personal circumstances, but in relation to their workload. A teacher in a

low-performing school said, “You see, the school should consider our capacity. How can we do all the work?” (LPS-1) and another teacher from a high-performing school said,

The problem is, nowadays our principals don’t confront the Department [of Education] people. They simply say ‘yes’ to whatever they suggest and ask the teachers to do all the things as they are told (HPS-6).

A cross reference can also be made here with the questionnaire comments of the teachers (Tables 4.4.6L, 4.4.6H and 4.4.7L/appendix-4) in the preliminary study, which revealed that the teachers received more workload from their school administrations than support in their teaching or encouragement for professional development. This finding seemed to imply that their teaching efficacy was affected.

7.7.2 Conducting creative lessons and gender differences

The noise of students from neighbouring classrooms (7.2.3) and the overcrowded classrooms (7.2.4) appeared to prevent the teachers from offering creative lessons, as they had to spend much of their time on managing the behaviour of the students in the classroom. The sub-analysis showed that there seemed to be a relationship between the aspect of classroom control and the gender differences of the participants. It was found that nine out of eleven teachers in low-performing schools (table 4.3.2L/appendix-4) who reported that they spent a good amount of time on controlling their overcrowded classrooms were female. Among the teachers in high-performing schools it was found (table 4.3.2.H/appendix-4) that four out of six teachers who reported their difficulty in conducting group activities due to having large numbers of students were female. While the male interview participants from both groups did not generally highlight the problem of classroom control, the female participants from both groups were concerned about it. The essence of all the female teachers’ views on classroom control can be understood in the following statement, “It is very difficult to control the students now. They are not like before” (HPS-1).

The analysis of the interview data seemed to indicate a positive relationship between the senior female and junior female teachers and the way they approached the students especially in relation to trying to motivate them. It was found from the interview data provided by the teachers that motivating the students was an important necessity for the teachers to bring them back to the work whenever they were distracted through talking among themselves. The senior female teachers both in low and high-performing schools said that they could motivate the students without much trouble if they could encourage them by referring to their talents and abilities. One of them said,

It's true that they always like to talk something among themselves and have fun. You know that we lose a lot of time by this, but if we encourage them by saying, 'you are talented' or 'you can do well', then they will be ok for some time. Teachers have to do this regularly to motivate them (HPS-3).

Senior male teachers also had similar views of motivating the students to exercise control over the class but by way of respecting and being friendly (lenient) with them. They said,

In my opinion if you respect them and instruct them certain things in a friendly way, they will do it (LPS-7).

What I mean by being friendly is to be more lenient with them. You can't do anything through punishment now (HPS-6).

However, the junior female or male teachers did not have such views in general. Many of them expressed frustrating views that they had no options other than enduring the behaviours of their students as it was, according to the teachers' views, the result of the prolonged civil war in the country which they claimed had contributed to a change in students attitudes to learning and behaving in the classroom. The two comments below exemplify their views,

It's really difficult to deal with them, because their mentality has completely changed [since the civil war]. It's not like our time when we were students. The parents also don't care much now (LPS-10).

The problem is that we cannot punish them now as before. I just ignore when they talk or disturb others. You see, those who are interested in learning will generally concentrate and learn and do the activities (HPS-8).

7.7.3 Fulfilling students' learning needs and gender differences

Twenty-three teachers in low-performing schools agreed (table 4.3.3.L/appendix-4) that it was challenging for them to teach their students what they really needed to learn. Twenty-one out of these teachers were female. Regarding teaching the curriculum only, fourteen teachers in low-performing schools **did not agree** (table 4.3.4L/appendix-4) that they taught the curriculum only. Thirteen out of them were female. Since most of the teachers were female, the difficulties of the teachers in low-performing schools in fulfilling the students' learning needs or teaching beyond the curriculum did not produce any particular findings in relation to the gender differences of the teachers. Hence it was found that a comparison among the teachers in relation to their gender was possible only among those who **agreed** that they taught the curriculum only. Twenty-three teachers agreed in low-performing schools (table 4.3.4L/appendix-4) that they taught the curriculum only. There were sixteen female and seven male teachers. One of the reasons i.e., *the time was limited to teach the curriculum only* was agreed by twenty teachers. Though the majority of them (thirteen teachers) were female, the majority of the teachers who strongly agreed were male (five out of seven) (table 4.3.4L/appendix-4). This data seems to raise an assumption that male teachers in low-performing schools were likely to struggle more with completing the syllabus within the stipulated time than the female teachers.

A possible reason could be traced from the interview data for the information given by the teachers in low-performing schools in the questionnaire i.e., the female teachers were generally able to finish the curriculum within the stipulated time. It was found that male teachers had more non-academic work than the female teachers. Non-academic work particularly going to the Department of Education for various purposes, or attending some work relating to the infrastructure of the school, or going out with students for extra-curricular events such as a football or cricket tournament or other sports events were found to be more associated with the male teachers than the female teachers. A male teacher in a low-performing school said,

... yes, the principal understands my problems because he knows that much work outside the school is done by me, so he wants me to arrange extra classes for the students (LPS-2).

Experiences such as those highlighted by the male teacher above would seem to suggest that the male teachers in low-performing schools were facilitated to complete the syllabus within the stipulated time.

No particular findings were obtained from the questionnaire and interview data in relation to gender differences among the teachers in high-performing schools. In contrast to the experiences of the male teachers in low-performing schools, the interview data of the teachers in high-performing schools revealed that except for going out with students for some extra-curricular activities, most of the non-academic work was done by non-academic staff.

7.7.4 Self-development of teachers and gender differences

Twenty-five out of thirty-one teachers in low-performing schools who reported (table 4.3.5L/appendix-4) that they found it difficult to develop their English proficiency, were female. Likewise twenty out of twenty-five teachers in low-performing schools who reported (4.3.6L/appendix-4) that they found it difficult to develop their pedagogical knowledge of English also were female. The primary reason they provided in both questions was the lack of time caused by their various family commitments. The lack of time as a reason for not being able to develop their English proficiency was also selected by more female teachers in high-performing schools than their male counterparts. Five out of nine teachers in high-performing schools reported (table 4.3.5H/appendix-4) about the lack of time for developing their English language proficiency.

Another positive relation was found among the female teachers. Twelve (three male and nine female) teachers in low-performing schools reported that they were able to develop their pedagogical knowledge of English (table 4.3.6L/appendix4). Of them six females strongly agreed and two females agreed that they really liked their teaching profession. It was found to be the same with the teachers in high-performing schools also. Seventeen teachers (fourteen female and three male) reported (table 4.3.6H/appendix-4) that they could develop their pedagogical

knowledge of English. Out of those fourteen female teachers four strongly agreed and eight agreed that they really liked their teaching profession.

In the interviews more female teachers than the male teachers in both the low and the high-performing schools revealed that they had a lack of time for self-development due to various family commitments. They said that they generally referred to some grammar books or pedagogical materials when some doubts arose in their classroom teaching but were unable to spend time regularly on self-development. They said,

When I have a doubt I check with a grammar book or ask a senior teacher, but you can see... allocating time on a regular basis is really difficult with all the family duties (HPS-2).

No... it's not that we have enough knowledge but..... you know that we really like to improve our knowledge but the time is a big problem (LPS-5).

Further, the interview data provided by the female teachers also revealed more elements of appreciation towards the teaching of English than the male teachers. For example the views of the female teachers were as follows,

... though it is very difficult to deal with them (students in low-performing schools) it gives me some satisfaction (LPS-6).

... many of them got through and I was extremely happy (LPS-9).

...because you know we are four teachers there and ...I can say... we are like a family...yea I like it (HPS-7).

May be I always have some motivated students...I think I like because of that (HPS-3).

For some years it was really tough but now I enjoy because I feel I give them something useful (LPS-3).

With regard to the male teachers the interview data did not register any opposite elements to those aforementioned, but the elements of appreciation of teaching English seemed to be lacking in their views.

7.7.5 English language teaching (ELT) regulations and gender differences

Table 4.3.7L (appendix-4) shows that twenty-seven teachers in low-performing schools agreed that it was difficult to co-operate with ELT regulations. The sub-analysis showed that twenty-one out of those twenty-seven teachers were female. Only six male teachers agreed with the difficulties in co-operating with the ELT regulations. The majority of the teachers who agreed with the reasons related to the main questions such as *the regulations were additional work to the normal teaching, no feedback was given, teachers were overburdened with many programmes and no impacts of the regulations on the classroom teaching* (Table 4.3.7L/appendix-4) were female. However, a particular reason i.e., *frustration in teaching* was negatively connected to the female teachers in the questionnaire. Only three teachers in low-performing schools agreed that they were frustrated in teaching and all three were male teachers. Eleven out of twelve teachers in low-performing schools who disagreed that they were frustrated in teaching were female. Hence the sub-analysis showed that though both male and female teachers in low-performing schools agreed that there were many problems in fulfilling the ELT regulations, the majority of the female teachers reported in the questionnaires that they were not frustrated in teaching English with such problems.

With regard to the teachers in high-performing schools, the questionnaire data showed that two reasons were positively connected with more female teachers than male teachers. Eleven out of sixteen teachers in high-performing schools who agreed that the ELT regulations helped them to be more organized in their teaching were female. Further nine out of eleven teachers who agreed that they could get help from their colleagues to fulfill the ELT regulations were also female. Hence according to the questionnaire data among the teachers in low-performing schools more female than male teachers reported that they did not become frustrated with their teaching and among the teachers in high-performing schools also more female than male teachers reported positive views about the ELT regulations.

However, in the interview data both the male and the female teachers had the same negative views about the ELT regulations especially about the school-based assessments (SBAs) and writing the lesson plan in the 5E method. The general ideas of teachers were, “The Ministry [of Education] does not consider the practical problems of the classroom contexts” (LPS-6), “The Department [of Education] implements things without any pilot programme” (HPS-1) and “Teachers are forced to spend much time without any real benefits to students (HPS-4).

However, consistent with the questionnaire data there were two senior female teachers (one from a low and the other from a high-performing school) who expressed some positive views about writing the lesson plan. One of them (LPS-3) said lesson plans were good because teachers could get different ideas only when they wrote something about the lesson. The other said,

You don’t need to write the lesson plan in 5E method. Why don’t you think of some different kind of lesson plan which is suitable to your context? I normally jot down some points in the margin of the textbook itself. That’s my preparation (HPS-3).

Hence, it was found in the sub-analysis that though both the male and female teachers expressed many negative views about the English language teaching (ELT) regulations in the questionnaire and the interviews, the positive aspects of the ELT regulation were identified by more female teachers than their male counterparts.

7.8 Teacher qualifications

According to *Table 21* in the methodology chapter (section 5.3.4.2) the qualification of the participants comes under three categories: the diploma holders from the National Colleges of Education (NCOE), the certificate holders from Teacher Training Colleges (TTC) and the teachers with no qualification. The following sections discuss how these three categories of teacher qualification can be associated with the five elements of the effective teaching of English as identified by the principals, retired teachers and resource personnel of English.

7.8.1 Daily lesson preparation and teacher qualification

The analysis revealed that among the teachers in low-performing schools their teaching qualification appeared to have an influence on their responses to the question regarding daily lesson preparation. It was found that only five out of those seven teachers (table 4.3.1.L/appendix-4) who did not agree that it was difficult to prepare their lessons daily were qualified teachers: two had qualifications from NCOE and three from TTC. They reported in the questionnaire that they did not need much time to prepare the lessons as they were familiar with the lessons. However, this argument can be easily challenged because there were also many qualified teachers among those who agreed that it was difficult to prepare the lessons daily.

Regarding the teachers in high-performing schools no particular findings were obtained as there were only two unqualified teachers among them. Both of them, along with eighteen teachers in high-performing schools (table 4.3.1H/appendix-4) agreed that it was difficult to prepare the lessons daily. However, teacher interviews in the high-performing schools revealed that two of the four interview participants who were from the NCOE were concerned about correcting their students' work regularly. One of them said,

I try my best to correct all their exercise books because the Department (of Education) always supervises that. But the problem is there are more than forty students and I need to spend much of the time (in correcting the students' work) (HPS-5).

Similarly, two NCOE interview participants in low-performing schools expressed the same idea that their daily lesson preparation was affected as they had to correct students' work from many classes. The TTC interview participants in the low and the high-performing schools did not express any views about correcting students' work. More light may be shed on this finding in relation to the length of time in the profession and the age group of teachers in section 7.9.1.

7.8.2 Conducting creative lessons and teacher qualification

Regarding teacher qualification in relation to conducting creative lessons as a teaching efficacy, the sub-analysis was able to trace a connection between the lack of duration of the lesson and the qualified teachers in low-performing schools. Nine out of twelve teachers in low-performing schools who reported that the duration of the lesson was not enough to conduct creative lessons were either from the National Colleges of Education (NCOE) or the Teacher Training Colleges (TTC). However, interestingly eight out of eleven teachers in low-performing schools who reported that it was difficult to conduct group activities due to the large number of students were unqualified teachers. On the one hand, qualified teachers reported a lack of lesson duration to conduct creative lessons and on the other hand, unqualified teachers reported the excess number of students as a difficulty in conducting group activities. From this it can be argued that qualified teachers who made the maximum use of the lesson duration were likely to find the time insufficient to implement their lesson plan, but the unqualified teachers were likely to be unaware of techniques (which qualified teachers had derived from their teacher education programmes) which would help them to conduct group activities with larger classes. However this view can be challenged by the questionnaire comments made by three teachers in low-performing schools and eight teachers from high-performing schools (tables 4.4.2L and 4.4.2.H/appendix-4) who said that creative teaching had nothing to do with teacher qualifications (teacher education) but with teaching experience. Therefore it is important to explore this perception further with regard to the length of time these teachers had in teaching.

In the interview data, the teachers' views on creative teaching were found to be different in relation to their teaching qualification. Generally all the interview participants complained of the problems they encountered in creative teaching, but the teachers from TTC were found to be more optimistic than the teachers from NCOE in dealing with the problems they encountered. For example a teacher from TTC in a high-performing school suggested a solution to the problem of taking students to the activity room due to the short duration of the lesson:

... this problem can be easily dealt with if the administration takes some efforts in creating more efficient timetables to the teachers. I mean if they give us double periods we can have enough time to conduct creative lessons in the activity room (HPS-1).

The teachers in low-performing schools who were from the TTC, though admitted that they did not have the necessary freedom in selecting suitable materials for their students, they suggested that the only solution to this problem was to confront the authorities who blamed the teachers for not observing the regularities of the Department of Education. They said,

I know we have to follow the textbooks, but I normally skip many sections which my students can't understand. Once I used Grade Seven book for my O/L students. Unfortunately some parents complained to the principal and he questioned me. The first thing I asked him if an expert from the Department (of Education) can teach my O/L students with their Grade Eleven book (LPS-3).

...since only the teacher knows the real standard of his (or her) students he (or she) has to be given freedom to choose the appropriate learning aids for them. Otherwise the teachers should not be afraid to take that freedom. It doesn't mean that we go against the system but we are actually helping our children (LPS-7).

Such optimistic views were not found among the teachers from the National Colleges of Education (NCOE) or the teachers without any qualifications. They generally just explained the problems without suggesting any solutions. However, it can be argued that different teacher qualifications do not necessarily produce different views. A useful piece of information from the contextual knowledge of the researcher to be considered here is that the teachers from the Teacher Training Colleges (TTC) were generally senior to the teachers from the NCOE both in age and years of teaching experience. This contextual knowledge of the researcher was also supported by the questionnaire and interview data of the current study as most of the teachers from TTC were found to be around fifty years of age or with more years of teaching experience than those from the NCOE. This is because the teachers from the NCOE are recruited soon after their Advanced Level school studies and become teachers in their mid-twenties. In the case of the teachers from TTC, they join the training colleges after a few or many years of teaching

without any teacher education. Consequently they obtained their teaching qualification in their mid or late thirties but they already had a few or many years of teaching experience. Hence it is reasonable to conclude that it was not necessarily their teacher qualification, but their age and length of teaching experience which were likely to lead the teachers in this study to express different views.

7.8.3 Fulfilling students' learning needs and teacher qualification

The questionnaire data provided by the teachers in low-performing schools revealed that their teaching qualifications appeared to be associated with their responses with regard to fulfilling students' learning needs. Fourteen teachers in low-performing schools reported (4.3.3L/appendix-4) that they could consider what their students really needed to learn. Twelve out of the fourteen teachers had a teaching qualification. All the twelve qualified teachers in low-performing schools believed that students' various learning needs should be considered rather than preparing them for the exam only. With regard to the question about teaching the curriculum only, fourteen teachers in low-performing schools reported (4.3.4L/appendix-4) that they taught their students more than what the curriculum prescribed. Ten out of fourteen teachers were qualified and all of them reported that their principals supported them to teach what they decided was beneficial to their students. Hence, in the light of the questionnaire data given by the teachers in low-performing schools, it is possible to associate the belief (that students' various learning needs should be fulfilled rather than preparing them for the exam only) with more qualified than the unqualified teachers.

Regarding the teachers in high-performing schools, seventeen of them agreed (4.3.3H/appendix-4) that it was difficult for them to consider what their students really wanted to learn. All but two of the other fifteen teachers were qualified. No particular findings related to teacher qualifications were revealed as all the teachers who did not agree that it was difficult to consider students' learning needs were also qualified. However when considering the responses of the teachers in high-performing schools to the question regarding teaching the

curriculum only, nine out of fourteen teachers who reported that they could teach more than what was prescribed by the curriculum (table 4.3.4H/appendix-4) had teaching qualifications from the Teacher Training Colleges (TTC). Seven out of those nine teachers selected the reason (table 4.3.4H/appendix-4) that their principals supported them in teaching what they decided was beneficial to their students. Since most of the teachers from TTC had more years of teaching experience than the teachers from the National Colleges of Education (NCOE), it is possible to suggest that their principals tended to have greater confidence in their (TTC teachers) teaching ability. A comment passed by one of the senior principals from a high-performing school supports this idea. He said,

You see the teachers of those days. They are really dedicated and have excellent discipline. Nowadays teachers are not serious at all (PR-H2).

In the comment above though it is possible to include the teachers both from TTC and NCOE in the expression ‘nowadays teachers’, the expression ‘the teachers of those days’ can be viewed as referring to those from TTC, as NCOE came into existence only within the last thirty years.

The interview data did not reveal anything in relation to the questionnaire data about the qualified and unqualified teachers in low-performing schools. Even the unqualified participants in the interviews seemed to have teacher beliefs that the students’ various learning needs should be considered. However, with regard to the teachers in high-performing schools, more teachers from TTC than the teachers from NCOE spoke about extra classes in relation to teaching beyond the curriculum. Two teachers from the TTC stated,

You know our school mainly targets student performance in the final exam, and the present principal always insists on having extra classes. Because he said that we should finish the syllabus first and then teach them additional things in the extra classes (HPS-7).

I normally arrange at least one extra lesson a week to teach something not in the textbook, because otherwise they cannot attempt all the questions in the test (HPS-3).

These kinds of views were not found among the teachers from NCOE. Three out of four NCOE interview participants in high-performing schools reported that they gave tuitions. They seemed to be more concerned about giving tuitions than arranging extra lessons for their students in the schools. From this it can be presumed that they were keen to earn extra money by giving tuitions in order to support their families.

7.8.4 Self-development of teachers and teacher qualification

According to table 4.3.5L (appendix-4), thirty-two teachers reported that they found it difficult to develop their personal knowledge of English. Nineteen of them agreed (table 4.3.5L/appendix-4), as said earlier, that they could not speak to their colleagues in English so as to improve their knowledge of English but such situations were not welcomed by the teachers of other subjects. Ten out of those nineteen teachers were unqualified teachers. It is likely that these unqualified teachers reported so, without actually trying to speak to their colleagues because of their possible low level of English proficiency. Because, in the interviews it was found that unqualified teachers in low-performing schools used much less English to express their views than the qualified teachers. However an unqualified teacher in a high-performing school was found to be using much more English than the qualified teachers which was, according to him, the result of many years of his teaching experience and frequent listening to the English news on the TV and radio. Hence it can be argued that it is not just a teacher's qualification which makes a difference to teacher proficiency in English, but actually using the opportunities that are available for teachers to practice and communicate in English.

Regarding the problems in developing the pedagogical knowledge twenty teachers in low-performing schools reported (4.3.6L/appendix-4) that they did not have access to reading materials to develop their pedagogical knowledge. Only five of them were unqualified and none of those five strongly agreed that they had access to reading materials to develop their pedagogical knowledge. Hence the majority of the teachers (fifteen) who reported that they did not have access to reading materials to develop their pedagogical knowledge were qualified teachers. This

question in the questionnaire seems to reveal a possible association between the qualification of the teachers and their concern about developing their pedagogical knowledge further than the unqualified teachers.

It was found in the interviews that the unqualified teachers generally had a constant expectation concerning when they would be allowed to join the Teacher Training College (TTC) so that they could become qualified teachers, have their teaching position made permanent and earn a much better salary than the current income. One of them said,

It is always frustrating that we work very hard like other qualified teachers but the salary is very poor (LPS-1).

From such comments it is possible to assume that the unqualified teachers were keen to enrol in a formal teacher training programme rather than engage in informal self-development so that they could secure a permanent teaching post. Hence, it is sensible to assume that the qualified teachers, since their teaching position was already secured, were able to think more about their personal development needs and how to address them.

The data provided by the teachers in high-performing schools on the problems in developing English language proficiency did not reveal any particular findings in relation to their teacher qualification. However, regarding the data about the problems in developing their pedagogical knowledge ten out of thirteen teachers who reported that they were confident about their current pedagogical knowledge were from the Teacher Training Colleges (TTC). Therefore it is possible to assume that since the teachers from the National Colleges of Education (NCOE) were generally younger (both in age and years of teaching experience) than the teachers from TTC they were likely to have less confidence in their pedagogical knowledge.

The views of the teachers in relation to self-development of the pedagogical knowledge they required were found to be more appropriate to be discussed under the section of length of time in the profession and the age group of teachers.

7.8.5 English language teaching (ELT) regulations and teacher qualification

The only connection which could be identified between teacher qualifications and the problems in fulfilling the ELT regulations was the connection between the unqualified teachers in low-performing schools and the absence of feedback on expected regulations. According to table 4.3.7L (appendix-4) ten teachers in low-performing schools *strongly agreed* and eleven teachers in low-performing schools *agreed* that they could not fulfil the ELT regulations because they did not get any feedback on them. Seven out of ten teachers who strongly agreed were unqualified teachers and two out of eleven teachers who agreed also were unqualified. Hence, altogether nine out of twenty-one teachers were unqualified. From what the unqualified teachers reported, the data analysis suggests that these unqualified teachers were in need of and wanted feedback from the personnel concerned so that they could make their English teaching more effective.

With regard to the interview participants, among the three unqualified participants (two teachers in low-performing schools and one in a high-performing school) only one teacher in a low-performing school expressed his view in relation to the questionnaire data that,

I am expected to fulfil all the regulations as other teachers, but I was never instructed by the ISAs or the subject coordinator or any other personnel. Sometimes teaching is really frustrating (LPS-1).

The teacher interview data was analyzed to see whether the other interview participants with a teaching qualification differed in their views as they consisted of two different groups i.e., teachers qualified from the National Colleges of Education (NCOE) and Teacher Training Colleges (TTC). It was found that teachers from NCOE had the tendency to express more negative views than the teachers from TTC. For example, a teacher in a low-performing school from NCOE said,

We waste a lot of time on 5E method and the school based assessments which are irrelevant to our students (LPS-8).

A teacher in a high-performing school (HPS-2) from the NCOE expressed her view that the Department of Education implemented the regulations without considering their real implications. However the views of the teachers from TTC,

though critical about the English language teaching (ELT) regulations, had the tendency to mention possible benefits of the regulations. For example the two senior female teachers (LPS-3 and HPS-3) who pointed out the positive aspects of the lesson plan in the previous section were from the TTC. Another teacher from the TTC in a high-performing school said about a positive aspect about the school based assessments:

As for me the school based assessment is irrelevant as the marks scored by the students are not added to the final exam, but it helps students to revise what they study regularly (HPS-7).

Many years of teaching experience and the seniority of age of the teachers from the TTC appeared to have influenced the way they viewed the ELT regulations. As said previously, unlike the teachers from the NCOE, the teachers from the TTC generally spent quite a number of years in teaching before enrolling themselves in a teacher training programme and consequently happened to be senior to the teachers from NCOE when they finished their teacher training and re-joined the teaching profession. It is quite possible that teachers from the TTC were exposed to a variety of opinions and experiences as many teachers from different teaching contexts came together for teacher training. Two senior teachers from TTC shared the same experience in an informal conversation with the researcher. They said that the training college education was really a blessing because when they joined the training college they were already teachers and they shared many ideas with others and also borrowed new ideas from other teachers. They added that they acquired more knowledge from the fellow teachers than the lecturers at the training college.

7.9 Length of time in profession and age group

In section 5.3.4.2 of the methodology chapter, *table 22 and 23* presented the length of time in the profession of the teachers in three groups: up to five years, from six to fifteen years and above fifteen years. *Table 24 and 25* presented the age of the teachers under three groups: from twenty-five to thirty-five, from thirty-five to fifty and above fifty. The following sections discuss how the length of time in the profession and the age group the teachers belonged to impacted on the five elements of their English teaching efficacy.

7.9.1 Daily lesson preparation

The analysis revealed that among both groups of teachers there was a possibility for a positive relation between the length of time in the profession and their familiarity with the lessons. Tables 4.3.1L and 4.3.1.H (appendix-4) revealed that five teachers each from the low and the high-performing schools agreed that it was not difficult for them to prepare the lessons daily as they were very familiar with the lessons. The analysis showed that all ten teachers were found to have between six to fifteen years of teaching experience. Five teachers in low-performing schools and two teachers in high-performing schools had between six and ten years of teaching experience. The rest of the three teachers in high-performing schools had from eleven to fifteen years of teaching experience. Though the data revealed that teachers (from both groups) who had more than five years of teaching experience had greater familiarity with the lessons and thereby were likely to offer more effective teaching, the majority of the teachers with such length of teaching experience did not select the reason that they had greater familiarity with the lesson. It is likely that even though they had greater familiarity with the lessons, their daily lesson preparation could have been affected by other reasons such as family commitment and teaching many classes based on the data reported above.

In the interviews both groups of teachers did not primarily highlight the aspect of familiarity with the lesson. There were six interview participants (four from low-performing and two from high-performing schools) with more than fifteen years of teaching experience. The views of these interview participants were compared with the views of those interview participants with less than fifteen years of teaching experience. It was found that most of the teachers with more than fifteen years of teaching experience had their own way of preparing the lesson while the others had a general tendency of writing the lesson plan in the 5E method as required by the Department of Education. One of the interview participants in a high-performing school with twenty-seven years of teaching experience said, “I normally jot down some points in the margin of the textbook itself. That’s my preparation” (HPS-3). One of the interview participants in a low-performing school with twenty-eight years of service said, “You have to do what is good for

your students and you should have the courage to confront the authorities” (LPS-3). It is likely that teachers with many more years of teaching experience had the courage to implement what they really found to be beneficial to their students while the others seemed to comply with certain regulations even if they were not beneficial to the students.

The data seemed to suggest that the perceptions of the teachers of how their daily lesson preparation was affected was not very much influenced by the age difference of teachers, but the way they approached the problem could be related to the different age groups of teachers. For example, the senior teachers (those who were above fifty years of age) had the tendency to critically view the regulation of the Department of Education to prepare the lessons in the 5E method. One of them said,

The Department (of Education) implements certain things without considering the practical issues. But I always do what is suitable to my students. I have my own way of preparing my lessons and I find it very useful to my students (LPS-3).

However, the younger teachers did not generally seem to have expressed such critical views about the Department of Education regulations.

7.9.2 Conducting creative lessons

Eight out of ten teachers in low-performing schools who reported that they became tired of teaching many classes (table 4.3.2L/appendix-4) not only had less than five years of teaching experience but also were between the age of twenty-five and thirty-five. Among the teachers in high-performing schools, two out of three teachers who reported that they became tired of teaching many classes (table 4.3.2H/appendix-4) also had less than five years of teaching experience, but were found to be more than thirty-five years old. Section 7.8.2 presented that eight out of eleven teachers in low-performing schools who reported that it was difficult to conduct group activities due to the large number of students (table 4.3.2L/appendix-4) were unqualified teachers. It was found that five out of eight unqualified teachers had less than five years of teaching experience and six out of eight teachers were less than thirty-five years old. It is interesting that young teachers between the age of twenty-five and thirty-five reported being tired of

teaching many classes while the older teachers did not. The view of a senior teacher in a low-performing school in the interview explained this issue.

Young teachers without teacher training seem to be teaching most of the time of the lesson and spending little time in student activities. They can easily get tired, but we know the problem. We allow more time to the students to do the activities so that we can manage many classes without getting tired (LPS-6).

The interview data provided further findings. As said in the previous section, senior teachers in low and high-performing schools with more years of teaching experience tended to make more effort in creative teaching than the junior teachers with fewer years of teaching experience. It was found that senior teachers from six to fifteen years, or more than fifteen years of teaching experience also agreed that there were many classroom difficulties in delivering creative lessons, but it was obvious from what they reported that it took some effort to overcome the difficulties. A female senior teacher in a low-performing school with fourteen years of teaching experience said,

Nowadays young teachers don't want to try alternative ways. I mean they just blame the situations and do only the minimum. The school has money to buy the quality input but our teachers are lazy to go and ask the principal (LPS-5).

This was supported by a male senior teacher with twenty-eight years of teaching experience in another low-performing school. He spoke about the dedication of older teachers compared with the lack of dedication of the young teachers,

I am not boasting but the old teachers have real dedication. Now the young teachers... they not only ask any advice or ideas from the senior teachers but also don't respect them (LPS-1).

Two senior teachers in high-performing schools with six to fifteen years and more than fifteen years of service had the idea that young teachers of the present time were keener on earning extra money by giving tuitions after school than taking school teaching as a serious responsibility. One of them said,

Young teachers have a lot of energy and they can do a lot to our children but sometimes they vanish even before the school is over. They are more interested in giving tuition than teaching in the school, because they earn a lot there (HPS-4).

In support of the views of the senior teachers with more years of teaching experience, it was found from the data that young teachers with less years of teaching experience did not generally report how they overcame classroom problems and did not suggest any alternatives. There were three junior teachers in low-performing schools with less than five years of teaching experience among the interview participants. When they were asked how they managed to overcome certain classroom problems their responses did not explain what they attempted but just reported what happened usually in the classrooms. For example two said, “Generally the students in small schools always find the textbook very difficult to understand. The language content is too high for them to comprehend” (LPS-10) and “It is extremely difficult to teach them reading because of the heavy noise of the students in other classrooms” (LPS-2). There were two teachers in high-performing schools with six to fifteen years of teaching experience. Though they were considered, according to the classification in this research, as teachers with more years of experience they were aged between thirty-six and forty. One of them said, “We cannot think of creative teaching because we need to follow the daily scheme of work” (HPS-8). These experiences seemed to suggest that junior teachers both in high and low-performing schools experienced difficulties in their English teaching, but it was the senior teachers with more years of teaching experience who suggested some alternatives to addressing the problems encountered.

7.9.3 Fulfilling students’ learning needs

The questionnaire data provided by the teachers in low-performing schools revealed that most of the teachers who reported that they could consider students’ various learning needs had six to fifteen years and above fifteen years of teaching experience. Out of fourteen teachers (table 4.3.3L/appendix-4) eight teachers had six to fifteen years teaching experience and three teachers had more than fifteen years teaching service. The majority of them also came under the thirty-six to fifty and above fifty years of age groups. According to the data only three teachers with less than five years of teaching experience reported that they would consider students’ various learning needs. Table 4.3.3L (appendix-4) shows that twenty-three teachers in low-performing schools reported that it was difficult to

consider the various learning needs of the students. The sub-analysis revealed that sixteen out of those twenty-three teachers had less than five years teaching experience and fourteen of them came under the twenty-five to thirty-five age group. Hence, it was revealed that the majority of the teachers who reported that they would consider student learning needs had six to fifteen or more than fifteen years of teaching service and were more than thirty-six years of age. From this it could be argued that the ability of the teachers to consider the various learning needs of the students reflected an increase with the years of teaching experience teachers had alongside their age.

The data provided by the teachers in high-performing schools revealed some positive correlation between the responses of the teachers and their years of teaching experience. Five out of eight teachers who reported (4.3.3H/appendix-4) that they could consider the various learning needs of students had more than fifteen years of teaching experience and all five were above fifty years of age. Further five of them strongly agreed that they believed that the students should learn something useful for their life rather than studying only for the exam.

Though teachers with six to fifteen years of teaching experience reported in the questionnaire that they could consider students' learning needs, in the interviews they were generally found to be highlighting various problems in considering students' learning needs. Instead the teachers with more than fifteen years of teaching experience expressed more views that they considered the learning needs of the students in the classroom. They said,

We can't avoid the textbooks but it is difficult to follow the textbooks without teaching some basic things to them. So I always arrange extra lessons in the weekends to teach the basic grammar and other things (LPS-3).

I know it is very difficult but the students believe that you will help them pass the exam. So you should give what they are lacking (HPS-6).

With regard to the question of difficulties in teaching more than what the curriculum contained, the number of teachers in low-performing schools with less than five years of teaching experience increased among those who reported that it was not difficult to teach more than the curriculum. Six out of fourteen teachers

(table 4.3.4L/appendix-4) had less than five years of teaching experience, six teachers had from six to fifteen and two teachers had more than fifteen years of teaching services. It may be interpreted from what the interview participants with less than five years teaching experience said that it was easy for them to teach other than what was prescribed by the curriculum such as ‘generally less challenging language items’ because of the low level of the learning ability of the students. They said,

The curriculum is same for all the students. So if you want them to learn something useful, then you have to teach some simpler things that are not in the curriculum (LPS-1).

Sometimes there is no option other than teaching something outside the textbooks because the standard of the students is very poor (LPS-10).

However among the teachers in high-performing schools mostly the senior teachers reported that they were able to teach more than what the curriculum prescribed. Seven out of fourteen teachers who reported that they taught more than what the curriculum requested had more than fifteen years of teaching experience. Six out of the rest of the fourteen teachers had six to fifteen years of teaching service. It was noted that among the teachers in high-performing schools there were only eight teachers with more than fifteen years of teaching experience. As with the senior teachers in low-performing schools, the senior teachers in high-performing schools with more than fifteen years teaching service or above fifty years of age expressed views in favour of teaching more than what the curriculum contained. Two teachers said,

They (students) should have a kind of overall knowledge in English, I mean, their knowledge should not be limited to the textbooks. But it’s not easy with all these things, you see, the syllabus, the scheme of work, the supervision of the Department (of Education) and then these parents... they will complain if we don’t finish the syllabus in time. But... I would say, if the teachers work hard, then they can easily consider the textbooks as well as whatever the students like to learn (HPS-3).

From my experience I can tell that after certain years of teaching you will have a kind of ... how can I put?...a kind of boldness to act on your own. You can see, that you can judge what your students need and teach what is useful to them. But the thing is you should have a good principal to support you. Otherwise, even if you have that courage you will see that you can’t simply do everything (HPS-6).

The teachers in the above statements considered what students liked to learn such as learning to read, speak, doing regular activities on grammar etc. (see 6.1.3/Chapter Six for more students; learning expectations). However, the younger teachers particularly those who had less than fifteen years of teaching experience tended to focus more concern about student performance in the exams.

You know our teaching context very well. The school system is not like before. The (school) administration wants us to produce certain percentage of the pass rate. We have so many ideas to improve students' standard but the system controls (HPS-1).

Every year the principal expects better results than the previous year. So we always concentrate on the textbooks and the past exam or the model exam papers to increase student performance in the exams (HPS-4).

Though the senior teachers did not express similar concerns, this does not mean that they were exempted from such expectations by the school administration regarding student performance. Moreover, it is likely that their long years of experience enabled the senior teachers to maintain student performance, as well as to consider, teaching more than what the curriculum required.

7.9.4 Self-development of teachers

Twenty-nine teachers in low-performing schools (seventeen teachers strongly agreed and twelve agreed) (table 4.3.5L/appendix-4) agreed that they had difficulties in developing their (teachers) English language proficiency because of their lack of English language exposure. They included the teachers with less than five years, from six to fifteen years and more than fifteen years of teaching experiences. But the majority of the teachers who strongly agreed with the lack of English language exposure were those who had from six to fifteen years of teaching experience (twelve out of seventeen). Nine out of those twelve teachers also came under the thirty-six to fifty years age group. In the Sri Lankan context the teachers with above five years of teaching experience are considered to have entered a period of being an expert in their profession (Samaraweera, 2011). Hence, it is likely that the teachers with six to fifteen years of teaching experience looked for more opportunities for self-development than others. This view was supported by eleven out of twenty teachers who had from six to fifteen years of

teaching experience and reported (table 4.3.6L/appendix-4) that they did not have access to reading materials to develop their pedagogical knowledge. The rest of the nine teachers included five unqualified teachers, three teachers with less than five years teaching experience and one teacher with more than fifteen years of teaching service. Except for the teacher with more than fifteen years of teaching experience all the others were between twenty-five to thirty-five years of age.

Among the teachers in high-performing schools sixteen teachers agreed (table 4.3.5H/appendix-4) that they could spend the necessary time to develop their English language proficiency and seventeen teachers agreed (table 4.3.6H/appendix-4) that they could develop their pedagogical knowledge mainly because they worked with experienced colleagues. The sub-analysis of data, on the basis of the length of the teachers' time in the profession or their age group, revealed that the majority of those who agreed had six to fifteen or more than fifteen years of teaching experience or came under the age group of thirty-six to fifty or above fifty years.

Hence, the majority of the participants who agreed (teachers in low-performing schools) or disagreed (teachers in high-performing schools) that there were challenges in self-development had either six to fifteen years of teaching experience or came under the age group of thirty-six and fifty years. This means the same category of teachers were more likely to agree or disagree according to the disadvantages (lack of language exposure and lack of reading materials) or advantages (teaching with experienced colleagues) that were relevant to their teaching contexts.

However, the interview data contained more similar views from both groups of the participants regarding the lack of quality in the seminars and workshops conducted by the Department of Education and the inefficiency of authorities in providing continuous professional development (CPD) programmes. Senior teachers' greater concern about the quality of the CPD programmes rather than the inefficiency of the educational authorities could be associated with their teaching experience (more than fifteen years of teaching experience) and age (above fifty

years of age). The idea of utilizing the retired teachers as resource personnel came from this group of senior teachers. They said,

As you know very well the quality of the Department (of Education) is sometimes hopeless. They simply conduct seminars for the sake of conducting. That's all (LPS-7).

The Department (of Education) can arrange retired teachers as the resource personnel to conduct the seminars. Because they know the problems and they have experience and ... they can give better seminars (HPS-3).

As the data revealed, the young teachers were found to be more concerned with the issues of inefficiency of the authorities such as not conducting seminars separately for teachers in low-performing and high-performing schools, conducting all the seminars within a short period of time and not making the CPD programmes available to teachers in remote or small schools.

The interview data also revealed another aspect in relation to senior and younger teachers. The senior teachers expressed two different views. One was the interest of the young teachers to earn more money by giving tuitions after school and the other, their unwillingness to approach senior teachers to get suggestions and insights about classroom teaching. They said,

no...what I mean is that they respect us but they don't respect or ... they don't care of our experience in teaching. They think they know new things in teaching because they passed out from the College of Education or did some Higher Diploma in teaching (LPS-7).

I know they come to the classroom unprepared because the whole evening they work in the private tuition centres and afterwards they are tired and they do nothing. They are more interested in making money than developing their knowledge (HPS-6).

However, the younger teachers seemed to have the tendency to accuse the school administration of not giving feedback on their work, especially on the lesson plans, and being reluctant to release the teachers to pursue teacher training courses. They said,

They don't give any feedback on the lesson plan, then how can we improve our classroom teaching? (HPS-4).

They don't worry about our qualification. They just want us to take the lessons. Because if I go to the training college, they have to look for another teacher. So every time we ask them [to] release us, they say to us 'wait for some time' (LPS-2).

7.9.5 Fulfilling English language teaching regulations

The sub-analysis showed that the length of time in the profession and the age group of the teachers in low-performing schools had some positive connection with one of the reasons in the questionnaire i.e., no impacts of the regulations on the classroom teaching. Nineteen teachers agreed with this reason (table 4.3.7L/appendix-4). Thirteen of them had from six to fifteen years of teaching and one of them had more than fifteen years of teaching experience. The rest of them (five) had below five years of teaching experience. Further twelve out of those nineteen teachers were in between the thirty-six and fifty age group. It was likely that the teachers with more years of experience and age were able to judge the irrelevancy of the regulations they were expected to follow. No particular findings were obtained from the questionnaire data provided by the teachers in high-performing schools in relation to their length of time in the profession.

In the interviews generally all the teachers from both groups expressed many negative views on the impracticality and the irrelevancy of the regulations. However, most of the complaints were from the teachers with six to fifteen years of teaching experience. According to *table 22* and *23* (discussed earlier), five teachers in low-performing and six teachers in high-performing schools come within this group. Most of the views referred to under the section subtitled *Irrelevant and impractical ELT regulations (section 7.5.1.1)* were from the teachers of this group. Though teachers with more than fifteen years of teaching experience also expressed complaints about the regulations, as said above they had the tendency to appreciate the positive aspects of the regulations. Samaraweera (2011) considered the end of five years in teaching as a transitional period from novice to expert. It is likely that teachers with from six to fifteen years of teaching experience had more tendency to look at the negative aspects of the ELT regulations they were expected to fulfil than the teachers with more than fifteen years of teaching service.

7.10 Comparison of low and high-performing schools

The introduction of Chapter One of this study explained that the educational authorities criticized that the lack of effective teaching of the current teachers of English in low-performing schools was one of the reasons for the low performance of students in English learning. The teachers reacted to such criticism by saying that their classroom teaching was hindered by so many problems and challenges. This section compares the realities of the low-performing schools with those of the high-performing schools in the light of the perceptions provided by the teachers in this study. Hence the purpose of the comparison is to analyse the issues that were, on the one hand, found to be hindering to the teachers in low-performing schools and on the other hand, helpful to high-performing schools to deliver effective English teaching. The comparison is discussed under the headings: workload of the teachers, qualifications of the teachers, opportunities for professional development, the teaching and learning environment, the teaching and learning materials and motivation for the teachers to perform well. The comparisons are displayed in a table first and then they are explained in the text. *Table 34* displays the comparisons below.

Issues of comparison	Low-performing schools	High-performing schools
Workload of teachers	<p>Due to insufficient numbers of teachers they have to teach many classes.</p> <p>Due to insufficient numbers of teachers they were deprived of collegial support in fulfilling ELT regulations</p>	<p>Due to sufficient numbers of teachers they were able to share their work.</p> <p>Due to sufficient numbers of teachers they enjoyed collegial support in fulfilling ELT regulations.</p>
Qualification of teachers	<p>Unqualified teachers had challenges in lesson preparation, handling group activities with larger classes, fulfilling ELT regulations without feedback and managing their self-development due to the absence of qualified colleagues.</p>	<p>Qualified teachers were able to overcome those challenges.</p>
Opportunities for professional development	<p>It was challenging for teachers to develop their own English language competency as their students were very low in English language competency.</p> <p>Circumstances were not conducive for attending continuous professional development (CPD) programmes.</p> <p>When CPD programmes were held commonly for teachers both in low and high-performing schools, specific needs of the former were ignored.</p>	<p>Teachers were able to develop their English language competency as their students were generally good in English language competency.</p> <p>Circumstances were conducive for attending CPD programmes.</p> <p>Common CPD programmes were not much detrimental to teachers in high-performing schools.</p>

Teaching and learning environment	Very noisy learning environment. Many intrusions during the lesson.	Less noisy learning environment. Fewer intrusions during the lesson.
Teaching and learning materials	The English level in the textbooks was too high for the students to understand. Lack of materials and resources as there were no activity rooms.	The students' language competence was good enough to understand the textbooks. Schools have necessary materials and resources in the activity rooms.
Motivation for teachers	Lack of teacher motivation due to lack of collegial support, lack of learning ability of students and lack of expectations from school administration.	Teachers are motivated through collegial support, high learning ability of students and high expectations of school administration.

Table 34: Comparison of low and high-performing schools

7.10.1 Workload of teachers

Both the questionnaire and the interview data revealed that the teachers in low-performing schools had more workload than the teachers in high-performing schools. From the views of the teachers and the contextual knowledge of the researcher the following was revealed. In Sri Lankan schools every grade according to the number of students is divided into divisions. In high-performing schools due to the large number of students, there are four or five divisions in every grade. In such cases, the Ministry of Education (MoE) provides three or four teachers. However, in low-performing schools due to the lower number of students there are either one or two divisions in each grade. If there is a single division in each grade in a school (especially in Type II schools and sometimes in 1C schools), the MoE will allocate only one teacher for English to that school. Though the number of teachers appears to be in proportion to the number of students, the teachers in low-performing schools have a greater workload than their counterparts, since many teachers in low-performing schools work as sole

teachers for the English language, they have to teach all the six different grades (from Grade Six to Eleven). This means the teacher has to deal with six different textbooks every day. However, the teachers in high-performing schools because of having many teachers in the same school may get opportunities to cover the required number of classes within two or three different grades and consequently they have to deal only with two or three different textbooks every day. According to the questionnaire data, fourteen out of thirty-seven teachers in low-performing schools (Chart 4.2.3/appendix-4) taught English in all six grades (from Grade Six to Eleven), but only five out of twenty-five teachers in high-performing schools (Chart 6.24.4/appendix-4) taught in all six grades. A teacher in a low-performing school said,

The number of periods for us and for the teachers of...(name of a leading school) is the same but we need to work extra hours since we teach the classes in all the grades (LPS-8).

According to the questionnaire data, eight out of the thirty-seven teachers in low-performing schools taught English as the sole teacher of English in their respective schools (Table 4.2.8/appendix-4). This means these eight teachers dealt with six different textbooks every day. But none of the teachers in the high-performing schools taught as sole teachers of English in their schools. Hence there was a possibility that the English teaching of the teachers in high-performing schools was more effective than their counterparts as their workload was lighter than the teachers in low-performing schools.

The teachers in the low-performing schools also highlighted their workload in relation to fulfilling the English language teaching (ELT) regulations. The teachers in the low-performing schools, especially in Type II schools, did not have colleagues to share their work. They did not have collegial support in fulfilling the regulations. It was likely that because of this absence of colleagues the majority of the teachers in low-performing schools agreed in the questionnaire that the regulations were an additional work to their normal teaching (table 4.3.7L/appendix-4). However, in the case of the teachers in high-performing schools nineteen out of twenty-five of them reported (table 4.3.7H/appendix-4) that it was not difficult to co-operate with the ELT regulations. Eleven out of

those nineteen teachers reported that they could easily get their colleagues' help in fulfilling the ELT regulations (table 4.3.7H/appendix-4). However, two teachers in low-performing schools said,

For the last three years I have been writing the scheme of work from Grade Six to Eleven. You won't believe that every time, when I finished writing it, it would be the end of the first term. But the teachers in ... (name of a leading school) never have such problems (LPS-11).

One of my friends is teaching at ... (name of a big school). He said that there are four teachers in his school and each of them writes the lesson plan only for one or two grades and then they share it with others. You see, I don't have that kind of opportunity in my school (LPS-2).

From the responses of the teachers in the high and low-performing schools it is possible to presume that the teachers in high-performing schools were more likely to be facilitated to fulfill the ELT regulations more easily by their colleagues and thereby they could possibly conduct more effective English teaching.

7.10.2 Qualification of teachers

According to the questionnaire data there were more unqualified teachers among the teachers in low-performing schools than the teachers in high-performing schools. Table 4.1.10 (appendix-4) shows that fifteen teachers in low-performing and two teachers in high-performing schools were unqualified. The research sample of the participants indicated that the presence of the more unqualified teachers was prevailing among the low-performing schools.

The questionnaire data showed a connection between the daily lesson plan and the qualification of the teachers. Thirty out of thirty-seven teachers in the low-performing schools reported (table 4.3.1L/appendix-4) that it was difficult for them to prepare their lessons daily and fourteen out of those thirty teachers were unqualified. Though sixteen teachers were qualified and reported that their family commitments were the main obstacle in their lesson preparation, interview comments by unqualified teachers about their poor lesson preparation could be associated with the absence of a teaching qualification. They said,

I won't say that the qualified teachers prepare their lessons better than me but I know I take much time to prepare my lessons, because I had seen a

qualified teacher in my previous school... he just spent a few minutes before the lesson and taught well (LPS-6).

Most of the time I prepare something for the lesson but I don't know if I do the correct thing because nobody taught me how to prepare. I just go through the textbooks and do something I can (LPS-10).

Further it was found that eight out of eleven teachers in low-performing schools who reported that it was difficult to conduct group activities due to the large number of students were unqualified teachers (table 4.3.2L/appendix-4). It is likely that the unqualified teachers in low-performing schools were unaware of techniques to conduct group activities with larger classes. This problem was reported by fewer teachers from the high-performing schools, arguably this is because the number of unqualified teachers was very low.

It was found from the data that the majority of the unqualified teachers in low-performing schools indicated that they were in need of feedback especially on the lesson plan they prepared every day. An unqualified teacher in a low-performing school said that though he was expected to fulfil certain English language teaching regulations like other qualified teachers, he was not assisted to fulfil those regulations via necessary feedback. Since the unqualified teachers were a majority among the teachers in low-performing schools it can be argued that this absence of feedback was more detrimental to them than the teachers in high-performing schools.

With regard to the self-development of the teachers of their pedagogical knowledge the teachers in high-performing schools were of the view that they had the advantage of working with highly qualified and experienced teachers in the same school. Eleven out of seventeen teachers in high-performing schools reported (table 4.3.6.H/appendix-4) that they could increase their pedagogical knowledge as they worked with qualified colleagues. However, the teachers in low-performing schools were deprived of such opportunities as they generally worked as sole teachers or with a single colleague. One of them said,

...the actual problem you see, we don't have another English teacher in the school to clear our doubts but the big schools like ... (name of a high-performing school) has many teachers for English (LPS-9).

Hence the data revealed that the presence of many unqualified teachers among the teachers in low-performing schools is likely to be identified with the following disadvantages: negative teacher attitudes towards the lesson preparation, teacher inability in handling the group activities with larger classes or fulfilling the ELT regulations without receiving feedback and teacher inability in managing their self-development due to the absence of qualified colleagues. The teachers in high-performing schools, since the majority of them were qualified, appeared able to overcome such shortcomings in their teaching contexts. Besides, the qualified teachers in high-performing schools enjoyed the advantages of necessary teaching and learning resources, sufficient numbers of English staff to share the work and students with high motivation and learning ability which were likely to enhance their motivation in teaching English.

7.10.3 Opportunities for professional development

7.10.3.1 Opportunities for personal language development

Both the teachers in low and high-performing schools were from the same social contexts of the district of Jaffna and hence they reported that there was a lack of English language exposure in their school and social contexts. They also reported that the development of their personal English competency especially, speaking competency was very much curtailed due to the existing English language curriculum which catered only for the reading and writing competencies of the students. The teachers from both groups said that since they were primarily engaged with only reading and writing skills of their students their (teachers') speaking ability remained at a lower level. However, the teachers in low-performing schools were more likely to be disadvantaged as their students, unlike the students in high-performing schools, were less able in helping their teachers improve their personal knowledge of English. It was found from the lesson observations during the preliminary study that the students in low-performing schools always conversed in Tamil. The teachers reported in the interviews that they could only use very short and simple English sentences in their conversations with the students and most of the time they received the replies from the students in Tamil. However, the classroom opportunities for the teachers in high-

performing schools to develop their English speaking skills seemed to be much higher as their students were able to speak in English fairly well.

7.10.3.2 Opportunities for professional development

Though the teachers both in low and high-performing schools were provided with the same continuous professional development (CPD) programmes, the data provided by the teachers revealed that the opportunities for accessing those programmes were not available to both groups of teachers in the same manner. It was found, according to the views of the teachers in low-performing schools, that they were affected at least in three different ways. Firstly, occasionally there were some special CPD programmes during school hours (normally CPD programmes are held at weekends). In such circumstances the teachers in low-performing schools especially those who taught English as sole teachers in their respective schools found it difficult to attend such programmes as there were no substitute teachers to cover their lesson during their absence. A teacher in a low-performing school said,

If it is a one-day programme it's ok but if it is a four or five days programme, the principal will be reluctant to release because I am the only one teacher for English here (LPS-3).

Secondly, the CPD programmes are normally held in the urban areas where the zonal Departments of Education are located. The teachers in low-performing schools who lived in remote villages found it difficult to attend the programmes on time or sometimes they had to miss the whole programme due to transport problems or lack of access to public transport. Thirdly, all the interview participants in low-performing schools expressed that the CPD programmes, since they were conducted commonly for the teachers both in low and high-performing schools, often failed to consider the teaching issues relevant to their low-performing school contexts as illustrated below,

The Department (of Education) people should consider our situation. They cannot simply take things for granted in terms of some leading schools (LPS-7).

You see, they should not ask us to do all what they expect from ... (name of a big school) teachers. They should realize that our students' standard is very low (LPS-4).

On the whole, the teachers in low-performing schools revealed the fact that though there were opportunities for CPD, they were deprived of those opportunities either because they were unable to attend the CPD programmes due to a lack of teachers in the schools to provide cover for them, or because of their inability in attending the CPD programmes due to practical problems such as the lack of frequent transport services from remote areas to the urban areas where the CPD programmes generally took place or the failure in informing the teachers in remote schools about the CPD programmes. They also reported that available opportunities for CPD were often irrelevant to their teaching context. Hence the data revealed that the opportunities for CPD were more in favour of the teachers in high-performing schools than the teachers in low-performing schools.

7.10.4 Teaching and learning environment

From the analysis of the data it was found that in low-performing schools the teaching and learning environment was more affected by the noise of the students in the neighbouring classrooms than in the high-performing schools. The classroom observation in the preliminary study revealed in detail how the classrooms in the low-performing schools were arranged in an open hall which left them exposed to the heavy noise of the students. The classroom observation also found that the lessons in the high-performing schools generally took place in a quiet environment as the classes were arranged in separate rooms. As was discussed in the main study analysis the noisy learning environment became detrimental to the students in low-performing schools especially in relation to learning proper English pronunciation from the teacher. A teacher in a low-performing school (LPS-11) said that the noisy learning environment was the main reason for the generally bad pronunciation of their students as the students could not hear how the teacher pronounced the words in English. Most of the interview participants in low-performing schools reported that it was very challenging to conduct activities such as role play and other speaking activities in a noisy classroom environment. Two said,

I always like to conduct all the role play activities, because it is really good for them [students] to improve their speaking ability. But I hardly succeeded because of this noise of the students (LPS-5).

I mostly ask them to do the written work, because you can't just have any speaking or listening activities with such heavy noise around you (LPS-12).

In contrast, the views of the teachers in high-performing schools revealed a more conducive teaching and learning environment for their students, though, according to them, it was not much utilised. One of them said,

Yes, the learning situation is really quiet but I rarely do speaking activities as there are lots of written tasks in the textbook. And also we don't have the speaking section for the exam (HPS-2).

The view of the above teacher in the high-performing school supports the views of the other teachers in high-performing schools about the lack of time to engage in speaking activities owing to having insufficient time because of the duration of the lesson and because of having to do lots of written activities in the textbook. However, on the part of the teachers in low-performing schools, the length of the lesson (forty minutes) became an issue in relation to an aspect of the teaching and learning environment i.e., the number of intrusions during the lesson. The data revealed that the lessons in the low-performing schools were subject to more intrusions than in the high-performing schools. The teachers in low-performing schools reported that the various classroom intrusions along with the varied learning capacities of the students made the lesson duration insufficient to cover the necessary activities in their teaching contexts. Two said,

The big schools normally have more regulations than our schools, and so the unnecessary disturbances are very rare in those schools (LPS-8).

At least for four or five times a student or a teacher or the office person comes in with some purpose. You see, out of forty minutes we can teach only thirty or less than thirty minutes (LPS-6).

7.10.5 Teaching and learning materials

The teaching and learning material which made the most significant difference between the low and the high-performing school was the textbooks. The textbooks for learning English appeared to be at too high a level for the students in low-

performing schools to understand. The textbooks were not differentiated according to the learning capacity of the students and hence the students from small schools and poor socio-economic backgrounds found it difficult to understand the high standard texts of the textbooks. In the preliminary study the majority of the students in low-performing schools reported that they **always** found the textbooks difficult to understand while the majority of their counterparts informed that they did **not at all** find the textbooks difficult (*figure 7/Chapter Six*). Further the lesson observations in the preliminary study revealed that the teachers in low-performing schools had to explain the whole lesson in the first language of the students while teachers in high-performing schools used the first language occasionally. In the main study interviews the teachers in low-performing schools expressed ample views that their students' standard of English was too low to deal with the textbooks. Three said,

Learning English is partly possible for my students only if the Ministry (of Education) gives different textbooks to them (LPS-6).

Sometimes I use Grade Eight or Nine textbook for the Grade Eleven students. Their textbook is really high for them (LPS-7).

You won't believe, in every comprehension text there will be at least one word which is new to me. You see, how can they (the students) understand it? (LPS-1).

According to the views of the teachers, besides the problem of the textbook the unavailability of other learning resources was felt by them as an additional problem to the teachers and students in low-performing schools. Though both the teachers in low and high-performing schools reported in the interviews that there was a lack of resources in the classrooms the latter had sufficient resources in the activity rooms. However in the case of the low-performing schools there were generally no activity rooms due to the lack of financial resources of these schools. Three out of the five low-performing schools where lesson observations were undertaken did not have activity rooms and hence the students there were deprived of lessons which could have been more effective by the use of different resources other than the textbooks. The views of the teachers revealed how the availability and the unavailability of resources affected or benefitted the students. One teacher in a low-performing school said,

You know, in my school, there is not even a proper dictionary to teach them how to use one (LPS-2).

The views of the teachers in high-performing schools revealed that their students had opportunities to receive more effective teaching than their counterparts. For example,

Though the lesson time is limited to access the learning resources easily, whenever I get the chance to use the activity room they get different styles of learning (HPS-6)

One day if I take them to the activity room they will keep on asking for it for a few days, because they like that kind of lesson (HPS-4).

7.10.6 Motivation for teachers

The data revealed a possibility for a lack of motivation among the teachers in low-performing schools in relation to fulfilling the English language teaching (ELT) regulations probably due to some external factors. The external factors were the absence of support of their colleagues, low level of learning ability of the students and lesser demands of the school administration. The positive side of these external factors were likely to motivate the teachers in high-performing schools to fulfill certain ELT regulations which in turn, according to the views of the resource personnel in the preliminary study, made their lessons more effective.

Though the teachers both in low-performing and high-performing schools expressed similar views in the interviews about the impractical and irrelevant aspects of the ELT regulations, the majority of the teachers in high-performing schools reported in the questionnaire (table 4.3.7H/appendix-4) that the ELT regulations were helpful to them to be organized in their classroom teaching. They also reported (eleven teachers) that they could easily get the assistance of their colleagues to fulfil the ELT regulations. This was because the high-performing schools generally have three or more teachers for teaching English. Further it was found from the views of the interview participants in high-performing schools that their school administrations, though exceptions were there, demanded the teachers to a considerable extent to implement the ELT regulations possibly for two reasons. One reason was probably to maintain the

standard of the school and the other was likely to satisfy the expectation of the officials of the Department of Education. A teacher in a high-performing school said,

Yes, we cannot avoid these things, because the school has a standard you know and the [school] administration is very careful about it (HPS-7).

Another teacher said,

... the principal knows that we spend much time on these but he wants us to do everything because the team [of the Department of Education] will come to supervise [inspect] and also they give marks for the administration (HPS-4).

In addition the teachers also agreed that certain regulations for example conducting the lessons in the 5E method was possible in their teaching context as their students were capable enough to follow the lesson through this method.

The study found that teachers in high-performing schools were in a way motivated by the above mentioned external factors. Consequently, though they considered the ELT regulations as irrelevant or impractical to their teaching contexts it is likely that they were motivated enough to consider the positive elements of the regulations and fulfilled them. However, it was evident from the views of the teachers in low-performing schools that they were not motivated like their counterparts in high-performing school as demonstrated by three teachers who said,

You see I can't even imagine to conduct my lessons in 5E method, because my students' level is so poor (LPS-10).

Sometimes it's really frustrating to do all these things alone, because I am the only English teacher in my school (LPS-8).

As you know our school is in a village. Students are not motivated and the parents are also not motivated. The school administration also is not much bothered about certain regulations. So teachers also don't take serious efforts (LPS-11).

The preliminary study of the current study revealed (section 6.3.1/Chapter Six) through the student questionnaire and the lesson observations that certain factors that belonged to the high-performing schools or the students studying there were advantageous to them to learn more English than the students in low-performing schools. In the like manner, the teachers' perceptions revealed, as described

above in the comparison, that certain realities that belonged to the low-performing schools or the teachers teaching there prevented them from exercising their English teaching efficacy as much as they would have liked.

In Chapter One attention was drawn to attribution theory, when discussing how the educational authorities and retired teachers of English had blamed teachers in low-performing schools for not teaching English effectively. Heffner (2014) says that in order to interpret a particular behaviour of a person, the interpreter needs to be aware of some external factors such as the view of the world of that person and prior experience and knowledge related to the person's behaviour. According to Heffner (*ibid.*) there will be a fundamental attribution error in explaining others' behaviour when such external factors are undermined. The comparisons of experiences of teachers in low and high-performing schools above revealed that there were many external factors (workload, lack of qualification, lack of opportunities for self-development, teaching and learning environment, teaching and learning materials and lack of motivation for teachers) which appeared to have a negative impact on the English teaching efficacy of the teachers in low-performing schools. The fact that the educational authorities blamed the teachers in low-performing schools suggests that they did not seem to have taken into consideration these external factors, and as such, caused a fundamental attribution error in interpreting their teaching.

7.11 Interplay of existing problems on teaching efficacy

The teacher questionnaire in the preliminary study revealed numerous problems that the teachers faced in their English classrooms. The problems were classified as classroom or pedagogical, socio-economic and political. The complete list of those problems was presented in section 6.4.4 of Chapter Six. However, in the main study not all the problems were highlighted by the teachers in relation to the aspects of English teaching efficacy. In the five sections of the first part of this chapter, the problems highlighted by the teachers in relation to English teaching efficacy were discussed. Besides affecting teachers' efficacy, these problems also affect each other as they exist together i.e., there is an interplay between the

problems. This section presents how the existing problems of English language teaching (ELT) affect each other. First this section lists all the problems identified by the teachers in the main study and then there will be a discussion as to how those problems interact.

- Various family commitments
- Teaching many classes in different grades
- Lack of resources in the classroom
- Noise of learning environment
- Excessive number of students
- Problems related to textbooks
- Following the textbooks and preparing students for exams
- Parental demands and negligence
- Lack of freedom and autonomy
- Students' learning needs should have been addressed in the primary school
- Lack of English language exposure in the classroom
- Lack of English language exposure due to existing English language curriculum
- Lack of pedagogical resources
- Lack of time for teachers to engage with self-development
- Unequal opportunities for teachers
- The quality of seminars/workshops
- Irrelevant and impractical ELT regulations
- Lack of intrinsic motivation of teachers

According to the perceptions of the teachers as reported in the first part of this chapter, it was found that certain problems left a longstanding impact on teachers' efficacy while certain problems had just a passing impact. Certain problems had their impacts according to the types of schools in which the teachers were working. The following section discusses the type of impact and how the problems interplayed in relation to low and high-performing schools.

7.11.1 Interplay of problems in low and high-performing schools

Two important problems which appeared to have a greater impact on each other in the low-performing secondary schools were the problems related to the textbooks and the problems caused by the students' learning needs, which, according to the teachers in the interviews should have been addressed in primary school. The teachers in low-performing schools perceived that their students were struggling to understand the language content of the textbooks. They also found that many activities in the textbooks were too challenging for their students. The reason for the students struggling, according to the teachers was the poor English language foundation they received in their primary schools. Teachers found that the very basic English learning needs of the students such as simple vocabularies, reading and basic grammatical structures which should have been instructed in the primary classes had been neglected. Consequently they found it very difficult to understand the textbooks in the secondary classes. Hence these problems were very much interconnected and highly impacted in low-performing schools. The teachers in the low-performing schools said, that the parents were generally very negligent with regard to their children's progress. Hence the mutual impact of these two problems (problems related to the textbooks and the problems caused by the students' learning needs), according to the views of the teachers in the interviews, seemed to be worsened on the one hand by the negligence of parents (7.3.1.1) concerning the progress of their children, and on the other hand, by the lack of freedom and autonomy (7.3.1.1) of the teachers. The students who were neither facilitated by the textbook nor provided with sufficient English foundation at the primary school level did not appear to be encouraged by their parents to learn English as they were not aware of the importance of English. In addition to this, the lack of autonomy of teachers was likely to prevent them from considering the present state of their students in the classroom, and instead they seemed to comply with the expectation of the official curriculum. Though teachers were interested in addressing students' learning needs in the classroom, they tended to focus more concern on teaching according to the textbooks as they were expected to finish the syllabus. These four problems which interplayed, affected two

particular aspects, English teaching efficacy such as the creative delivery of English lessons and fulfilling the learning needs of the students.

Besides these four problems, the data provided by the teachers revealed that there were two important problems which interplayed more in low-performing schools than in high-performing schools. They were teaching in many different classes and teachers' family commitments. Due to the lack of teachers, in many low-performing schools some teachers had to teach from Grade Six to Eleven. This increased their workload as they had to deal with six different textbooks every day. Teachers' workload seemed to have often been exacerbated by their personal family commitments. In between these two problems, an important problem that added to their difficulties was the English language teaching regulations, particularly the 5E method, which were perceived by the teachers both in questionnaires and interviews (7.5.1.1) as irrelevant to their teaching contexts. The teachers who had to deal with all six different textbooks had to spend enormous amounts of time in writing six different lessons plan in the 5E method and found it impossible to do it along with their family commitments. The aspect of English teaching efficacy which was likely to be affected by the interplay of these three problems was the daily lesson preparation.

There was another set of problems which interplayed and affected the English teaching efficacy of the self-development of the teachers in low-performing schools. According to their perceptions, they lacked pedagogical resources from senior and experienced colleagues as they happened to work as the sole English teacher in their schools. This lack of pedagogical resources was more likely to be worsened as they failed to get opportunities to attend continuous professional development (CPD) seminars due to the lack of teachers to substitute for them in their school during the CPD seminars, or due to only having access to poor transport facilities to travel to the urban areas which meant they did not arrive in time to attend such seminars. Along with these two problems, the lack of time for teachers to engage with self-development and teachers' personal family commitments which contributed to the lack of time available were two other problems which interplayed and appeared to have a negative impact on the teaching efficacy of the self-development of the teachers.

In high-performing schools according to the teachers' views, two important problems which interplayed and appeared to negatively impact on the teaching efficacy of the creative delivery of lessons were the excessive number of students and the lack of resources in the classroom. Classes in high-performing schools became overcrowded as most of the parents sent their children there believing that those schools provided quality education to their children. Though high-performing schools are generally very well-resourced, the teachers revealed in the interviews that the teaching and learning resources are not kept in the classrooms for security reasons. This made it very difficult for the teachers to gain access to the resources whenever they needed them. According to the teachers' view, on the one hand, they expressed their difficulty in taking the students to the activity room (where the resources are kept) due to the short duration of the lesson, and on the other hand, it was difficult for them to take resources to the classroom for about forty students. Consequently, these two problems interplayed and appeared to have a negative impact on the creative teaching of English. In the meantime two other problems such as following the textbooks to prepare students for their exams and the parental demands to teachers to complete the syllabus in time interplayed with the previously mentioned two problems, which was likely to prevent teachers from delivering creative teaching and considering students' learning needs. As the teachers revealed, in high-performing schools there were always demanding expectations from the parents that teachers should finish the syllabus in time to prepare the students for the exam. The educational authorities also expected the same. This parental demand or expectation from the educational authorities appeared to have encouraged the teachers indirectly not to consider the creative aspect of the lesson or the learning needs of the students but to cover the syllabus as early as possible. Another problem i.e., the lack of teacher freedom or autonomy also appeared to indirectly encourage the teachers not bother about the students' learning needs, but to comply with fulfilling the official curriculum. Hence, it could be argued that five different problems interplayed to affect the aspects of English teaching efficacy such as the creative delivery of lessons and fulfilling students' learning needs in high-performing schools.

The teachers' data revealed that there were some problems which were common to both low and high-performing schools. The lack of teaching and learning resources in the classroom was a common problem to the teachers and students of both groups of schools. However, this problem in a way was condoned by the teachers because of two other common problems i.e., following the textbooks and preparing the students for the exam. In other words since teachers were primarily expected to follow the textbooks and prepare the students for the exam, it could be argued that the lack of additional resources (other than the textbook) indirectly encouraged the teachers to rely on the textbooks all the time. At this juncture another problem i.e., the lack of autonomy of teachers came into interplay such that the teachers were still more encouraged to be satisfied with following the textbooks and preparing the students for the exam only. This problematic situation interplayed by the aforementioned three problems can be considered to be sustained by other problems related to the development of the teachers such as lack of pedagogical resources and the poor quality of continuous professional development programmes. The lack of opportunities for the teachers to broaden their pedagogical knowledge could be considered as a source of discouragement for them to overcome the challenges in their teaching contexts.

7.11.2 Problems which made a longstanding impact on teaching efficacy

From the teachers' points of view some of the problems in the list given above can be considered as problems which had a longstanding impact on their English teaching efficacy. As for the teachers in low-performing schools, three problems such as the problems related to the textbooks, the unattended learning needs of students in the primary school and the lack of English language exposure in the classroom seemed to have made a longstanding impact on the teaching efficacy of the teachers of English. According to the perceptions of the teachers, their teaching efficacy was very much challenged as they found it difficult to consider all their students learning needs many of which they felt should have been addressed in their primary school. It left a longstanding impact on the teachers' efficacy as they found the students struggled to learn English throughout their secondary education. The problems related to the textbooks is another problem which has a longstanding impact on English teaching efficacy as the Ministry of

Education in Sri Lanka maintains the single textbook scheme, which according to the views of most of the teachers, fails to offer appropriate learning materials to the students in low-performing schools. The problem of the lack of English language exposure is a continuous challenge to the teachers' efficacy as students have no real life opportunities to practice what they learn in the classroom. Along with these three problems, another problem which is related to the socio-economic aspect of the low-performing schools is the seeming negligence of the parents in supporting the English progress of their children. It is likely that the poor socio-economic status of the parents in villages and remote areas kept them unaware of the importance of learning English, for example, going to university and/or securing employment. Hence these aforementioned four problems interplayed to leave a longstanding impact on the English teaching efficacy of the teachers in this study, and one could argue also on the limited future employment prospects of the students they taught.

As for the teachers in high-performing schools, their views revealed that three problems interplayed and left a longstanding impact on their teaching efficacy: the problems of preparing the students for the exam, parental demands and the lack of autonomy of the teachers. The study revealed that the aspects of teaching efficacy such as the creative delivery of the lesson and considering the learning needs of the students were likely to be neglected continually as the teachers are expected to prepare the students by following the textbook by two interest groups: parents and educational authorities. According to the perceptions of the teachers, parents demand that teachers should finish the syllabus in time to prepare the students for the exam while educational authorities expect the teachers to complete the syllabus in time so that they can do as many as past exam papers with the students to make them perform excellently in the exam. According to the views of the teachers such expectations in a way forced them to complete the syllabus in a hurry with no time for creative lessons or to exercise their autonomy in teaching to teach what their students really desire and need. Hence, the teachers are expected to fulfill the demand of the parents and the educational authorities at the expense of the aspects of creativity and autonomy in teaching.

7.12 Problems of English teaching efficacy according to Weiner's attribution model

This section of the chapter discusses the problems of English teaching efficacy (outlined in section 7.11) according to Weiner's (2006, 2012) model of attribution, which was set out in Chapter One (see 1.3.4). Since Weiner explains how learners form causal beliefs in matters related to their learning (Weiner, 2005, 2012), Weiner's conceptualisations are being used here to interpret these Jaffna teachers' perceptions. This is important because the teachers also, as learners, made attributions to their success and difficulties they encountered in exercising their English teaching efficacy. Further, the application of Weiner's perspectives is an aspect of innovation in the current study as no previous studies in the Sri Lankan context have used Weiner's model to interpret their data findings.

This section is divided into three sections. Section one discusses how the teachers of English attributed different causes to the failure or the underperformance of students in learning English. The second section investigates whether there were any emotional responses from the teachers of English as they attributed causes to their success or failures in teaching English. Section three discusses the behavioural changes the teachers were/are deemed likely to make following the attribution(s) they made.

7.12.1 Attributions made by teachers

According to Weiner's (2006, 2012) model of attribution, the attributions made by the teachers are discussed under three dimensions: locus of control, stability and controllability.

7.12.1.1 Locus of control

In the current study locus of control refers to teachers' belief that their behaviour (i.e., their attempts to teach English effectively) is affected by external or internal factors (Cf. Anderman and Anderman, 2009). According to the views of the teachers both in the low and high-performing schools most of the causes attributed

to the failure in conducting effective English language lessons were external to the teachers. Teachers' family commitments, lack of learning resources in the classroom, textbook related problems, lack of opportunities for professional development and noisy teaching environment are a few examples to mention. However, very few internal causes were attributed by the teachers to the failure of teachers in English teaching efficacy, for example, the lack of freedom and autonomy of teachers or lack of intrinsic motivation of teachers.

7.12.1.2 Stability

Stability, in the current study, refers to how likely it is that the probability of the classroom and other various problems (causes) will change over time (Cf. Fiske and Taylor, 1991). The views of the teachers in the current study revealed that most of the problems and challenges that affected their English teaching efficacy seemed to be stable. In other words the problems were not likely to change over time. Most of the problems are very much interconnected with one another and have national implications and thereby are likely to be stable for a long time. For example, the expectation of the school administration that teachers will follow the textbooks and prepare the students for the exam, parental demands over teachers to prepare their children primarily for the exam, and the lack of freedom and autonomy for teachers to teach what the students actually need to learn are interconnected problems. Certain problems have national implications. For example, the problems related to the textbooks and the problems caused by the irrelevant and impractical English language teaching regulations for Jaffna teachers and schools are not easy to change over time as these issues are nationally implemented. Besides, certain problems such as teaching many classes in different grades, lack of resources in the classroom, learning environment being noisy and excessive number of students are more school specific, and therefore have local implications. However, to change such school specific problems the teachers of English need the support of the school administration and hence are likely to remain stable.

7.12.1.3 Controllability

Controllability in the current study refers to the control of the teachers over the problems affecting their English teaching efficacy (Cf. Fiske and Taylor, 1991). According to the views of the teachers, except for a few problems such as the family commitments of the teachers, lack of time and motivation of the teachers, most of the problems were out of the control of the teachers. The problems of teaching in many different grades, problems related to the textbooks, unequal opportunities for the professional development of teachers, lack of quality of the seminars and workshops, and irrelevant and impractical English language teaching regulations were out of the control of the teachers. However, the views of the teachers particularly those of the senior teachers revealed that the efforts of the teachers could exert control over certain problems to some extent. For example, some senior teachers in a low-performing school said that the lack of resources in the classroom and the lack of teacher freedom to teach what the students really wanted to learn could be overcome with the efforts of the teachers. A senior teacher said,

There are resources but our teachers should make efforts; if you want A4 sheets go and ask in the office (LPS-3).

Though teachers could overcome certain problems through their efforts as the senior teacher suggested this study found that the interconnectedness of the many problems faced by the teachers made them complex and out of control of the teachers.

7.12.2 Emotional responses of teachers

7.12.2.1 Pride and self-esteem

Pride and self-esteem are important emotional responses people make when they attribute their success to some internal causes such as ability and effort (Weiner, 2006). The current study, since it focused on the problems affecting the English teaching efficacy primarily in relation to the failure of students in learning English, it did not highlight the success of the teachers. Even though there could have been occasions of pride and self-esteem for the teachers in high-performing schools as their students were successful in English learning, the nature of the

research question made them speak mainly about their failure(s) in relation to their effective teaching of English in the classroom. However, some teachers particularly those from the high-performing schools expressed the emotions of pride and self-esteem as they selected the given options in the questionnaire. The options selected by the teachers such as *I have a good command in English language, I believe that students should learn something useful for their life rather than studying only for the exam* **and** *I am confident with my current knowledge of English* revealed these teachers' sense of pride and self-esteem. While the teacher questionnaire provided opportunities to express emotions of pride and self-esteem the factors influencing such emotions were not explored in the teacher interviews.

7.12.2.2 Relaxation or surprise

According to Weiner (ibid.), relaxation or surprise are the emotional responses of learners when they attribute success (e.g: passing exams) to the causes external to them such as luck. There were instances in the current study where the teachers both from low and high-performing schools, particularly the latter, expressed a sense of relaxation as they attributed the success they experienced (eg: delivering creative lessons) in teaching English to luck. For example,

I teach only few classes,

I didn't need much time as my students were in good standard of English,

I have got a small number of students in my classrooms,

My classroom is located in a quiet place,

My students have positive attitudes towards learning English,

My principal supports me to teach what I decide is beneficial to my students,

My students show interest in learning more than what is in the curriculum
and

There are experienced English teachers working with me.

7.12.2.3 Hopefulness or hopelessness

The most expressed emotional responses by the teachers was hopelessness. The teachers found that the level of the difficulty of the task was high. The tasks in the current study can be referred to as the aspects of the English teaching efficacy such as daily preparation of the lesson, creative delivery of the lesson, fulfilling students' learning needs, self-development of teachers and cooperating with the English language teaching (ELT) regulations. When teachers found they were unable to complete the task because of various external causes, they had a sense of hopelessness of future success in achieving the tasks. According to Weiner (ibid.) the stability of the causes is directly related to the expectancy of success in future. As said above, most of the external causes attributed by the teachers to their failure in completing the tasks were stable and consequently the teachers hardly had hope for future success. There were numerous instances where the teachers in high and low-performing schools expressed their feelings of hopelessness when their effectiveness in English teaching was affected by many external causes. For example,

...you can imagine in the midst of all these things how we manage to prepare our lessons...(LPS-5).

...but it is difficult to prepare for every class,.. (LPS-11)

...you can understand how extremely difficult it is to write the notes of lesson ...(LPS-3).

It is really impossible and I often feel some stress...(LPS-8).

...You see, it is an unnecessary problem (HPS-8).

...you can't actually plan an interesting lesson with such a big number of students...(HPS-2).

...because otherwise we cannot get some other learning materials for each student (HPS-8).

We simply waste our time (LPS-7).

7.12.2.4 Frustration

The current study reported the emotion of frustration from the teachers. However the teachers expressed frustration not because of their own fault but because of the educational authorities. For example,

Sometimes it is very frustrating that those who conduct seminars simply ignore problems related to us (LPS-11).

Sometimes it is really frustrating that the school doesn't care about the teachers (HPS-6).

It is frustrating that the school administration is more concerned about the demands of the department than teachers' problems (HPS-8).

Hence, the causes of teachers' frustration were external to them, i.e., the lack or absence of efforts by the educational authorities in addressing the problems affecting English teaching efficacy. Since the causes of teachers' frustration were the lack of efforts of the educational authorities, they were controllable by the same (i.e., educational authorities).

7.12.2.5 Anger

Another emotional response of the teachers was anger. Like frustration, the emotion of anger was also aimed by the teachers at the educational authorities who failed to take efforts to address the problems which prevented the teachers from being effective in English teaching. Teachers were angry that the educational authorities did not take necessary efforts to give them feedback on their lesson preparation or address the irrelevant and impractical ELT regulations or provide quality seminars and continuous professional development programmes. For example,

Which ISA checks our lesson plan to see if we teach the lesson interestingly? (HPS-4).

...but they give priority for the recognition of the school through students' performance [not giving priority to the betterment of students] (HPS-3).

Having investigated the emotional responses teachers made, the next section views how these emotional responses led the teachers to have had behavioural changes in their teaching.

7.12.3 Behavioural changes of teachers

According to Weiner (2000), the attribution we make influences our subsequent behaviours in predictable ways. "Both the expectancy beliefs and the emotions that individuals experience as a result of the attributional process tend to

determine future behaviours” (Anderman & Anderman, 2009: 2). According to the views of the teachers in the current study, a lack of expectancy for success and the emotional expression of hopelessness were prevailing among them.

According to Weiner’s theory, stability of the causes is directly connected to one’s expectancy of success. For example, a person’s ability is stable and if the person attributes his/her success to their ability then the person will hope for success in a similar event. In the current study, the teachers attributed their failure in the effective teaching of English to many external causes and it was found that most of the external causes were stable. Further the teachers found that due to many stable external problems, the difficulty level of the task (i.e., English teaching efficacy) was very high and thus they had a sense of hopelessness. At this point the study analysed the data to see if there were any behavioural changes. Since the teachers in the current study primarily focused on how their teaching efficacy was affected by various problems they did not mention how they changed their behaviour in view of enhancing their motivation and consequently their teaching efficacy. However, the personal English teaching efficacy exercised by teachers in their classroom (as reported by the teachers in section 7.6 of Part I of this chapter) can be considered as the behavioural changes made by teachers after attributing their failure to many stable causes external to them.

According to the views of the teachers, they believed that they could overcome the problems against their English teaching efficacy by changing their teaching behaviour. Eliciting students’ desire in learning English, teaching only what the students could understand, taking bold decisions for the good of the students, demanding co-operation of the educational authorities to implement what the teachers believe to be effective instead of complying with irrelevant issues, enhancing students’ communicative competence and encouraging the students to be more autonomous in learning were the changes considered by the teachers in relation to their teaching behaviours.

7.13 Chapter summary

This chapter analysed and discussed the questionnaire and interview data obtained from the Jaffna teachers of English in the main study. The majority of the teachers in low-performing schools agreed with all the seven questions of the questionnaire, but the majority of the teachers in high-performing schools agreed only with two questions regarding the problems experienced in daily lesson preparation (question one) and fulfilling the learning needs of the students (question three). Even though the teachers in high-performing schools reported in the questionnaire that they were able to exercise certain elements of English teaching efficacy in their classrooms, in the interviews they admitted that they found themselves in similar challenging situations like their counterparts. A possible interpretation for the different information given by the teachers in high-performing schools in the questionnaires and the interviews was that they were likely to identify their teaching contexts with some elements of the positive statements they found in the questionnaire: the elements such as the possible opportunities to use their English fluency with their students, the interest of students to learn more than what is in the curriculum and teaching alongside experienced teachers. However, when they were lead through in-depth interviews to explore their teaching contexts they were likely to articulate the real problems and challenges they encountered.

According to the questionnaire and the interview data provided by the teachers in low and high-performing schools, a number of classroom and other related problems or issues appeared to have impacted on the teachers' teaching efficacy as follows:

- Teachers' various family and parental commitments at home appeared to have had a negative impact on their English teaching efficacy through their daily lesson preparation. Teachers also found the lesson preparation time consuming when they had to deal with many different textbooks as a result of their classes being distributed among different grades.
- Teachers' teaching efficacy in delivering creative lessons seemed to be greatly stifled by the lack of material resources in the classroom, the noise of students from the neighbouring classrooms, the large number of

students in the classrooms and the problems related to the textbooks they used.

- Their efficacy in fulfilling various learning needs of the students was likely to have been impacted primarily by the general expectation of the school administration for teachers to complete the textbooks before the exams or follow the textbooks according to the scheme of work. It was found from the teachers' views that the teachers, particularly those in low-performing schools, felt that they could not effectively address their students' learning needs as they argued they should have been sorted out in their primary school classes.
- Their efficacy in enhancing their own English proficiency seemed to have been impacted by the lack of English language exposure in and outside their school contexts. According to the teachers' view, the lack of language exposure was partly caused by the existing English language curriculum, which dealt mainly with the reading and writing skills of the students. Further, their attempts in developing their pedagogical knowledge appeared to have been curtailed by the lack of resources and opportunities in Jaffna or by the lack of quality in the available facilities for professional development.
- Teachers expressed their dissatisfaction with the English language teaching regulations as they found them irrelevant or impractical to their students and teaching contexts. Teachers' dissatisfaction appeared to have its impact on their efficacy in teaching through co-operating with those English language teaching regulations. Their efficacy also seemed to be impacted by their own frustration in teaching.
- According to the sub-analysis of the data there were some important findings under the categories such as gender differences of the teachers, the teacher qualification, the length of time in the profession and the age group of the teachers.
 - ***Gender differences:*** The personal family commitments of the teachers seemed to have impacted more female than the male teachers. Consequently more female teachers than the male teachers expressed their difficulty in finding time for their self-development. The female teachers also expressed their difficulty in controlling large classes. However senior female teachers reported that they were able to motivate students in learning more efficiently than young male and

female teachers. More male teachers than the female teachers found it difficult to complete the syllabus in time as they were more engaged with non-teaching tasks than the female teachers. Though both the male and the female teachers found the English language teaching (ELT) regulations irrelevant or impractical, the female teachers seemed to be more appreciative about the positive aspects of the regulations and thereby appeared to express less frustrating attitudes towards the regulations and the overall teaching profession than the male teachers.

- ***Teacher qualification:*** Teaching qualifications came under three categories: teachers who had certificates from Teacher Training Colleges (TTC), teachers who were holding a diploma from the National Colleges of Education (NCOE) and teachers without any qualifications. The perceptions of the teachers (about their classroom teaching) without any teacher qualifications generally seemed to suggest that the teachers had less confidence in their teaching: from what they reported it was presumed that they needed more time for lesson preparation than the qualified teachers, they found it difficult to conduct group activities for students in the classroom, they had the tendency to converse in their first language most of the time rather than in English, they seemed to be more keen in obtaining some formal teacher education probably in order to make their profession secure and they needed feedback from the educational authorities to fulfill the ELT regulations. Qualified teachers appeared to have some positive aspects that they were able to have the maximum use of the available lesson duration, they seemed to have the teacher belief that students need to learn something for their life rather than studying for the exam alone and search for opportunities to develop their pedagogical knowledge. Among the qualified teachers, there were some differences between the teachers from TTC and NCOE. Since the teachers from TTC had more teaching experience and were senior to those from NCOE, the principals seemed to have more confidence in their teaching than in the teaching of the teachers from NCOE.

Further it was found that teachers from TTC were able to identify the positive aspects of the ELT regulations and had the tendency to suggest ways and means to solve difficulties encountered, while the teachers from NCOE had the tendency to get on with the problems and challenges without attempting to find any solutions for them.

- ***Length of time in profession and age group of teachers:*** Regarding the length of time in the profession, teachers within their first five years of teaching, from six to fifteen years of teaching and more than fifteen years of teaching were considered. Regarding their age group, teachers from twenty-five to thirty-five years, from thirty-six to fifty years and more than fifty years were considered. The teachers with more than five years of teaching experience seemed to have greater familiarity with the lesson than those who had less than five years of teaching experience. However, the teachers with less than five years of teaching experience who came under the age group between twenty-five and thirty-five took much of their students' work home for correction or taught many more classes than others. The teachers with more than fifteen years of teaching experience or who were more than fifty years of age seemed to be critical about writing the lesson plan in the 5E method and some of them had the tendency to follow their own way of planning the lesson, but the teachers below fifteen years of teaching experience were not so. More young teachers with less than five years teaching experience or who were of the age group between twenty-five and thirty-five seemed to have the tendency to become tired of teaching than older teachers. The teachers in both low and high-performing schools who had more than fifteen years of teaching experience and were above fifty years of age were found to make more effort in creative teaching, or to overcome classroom problems and appeared to have the ability to identify the learning needs of the students than the teachers with fewer years of teaching experience and who were younger. Regarding self-development, the teachers in both low and high-performing schools who had more than five years of

teaching experience or who were above thirty-five years old had the tendency to make more effort than younger teachers. The same category of teachers were also able to critically approach the English language teaching (ELT) regulations. Some of them reported having the courage to confront the authorities in relation to ELT regulations which were not relevant to their students.

Having reported the problems and challenges they faced in fulfilling the elements of effective teaching of English proposed by the educational authorities and retired teachers of English, the current teachers of English in Jaffna revealed how they understood their personal sense of teaching efficacy in their own classroom contexts.

The teachers in low-performing schools revealed four elements of their personal sense of teaching efficacy:

- They tried to elicit a desire among students towards learning English as a whole instead of delivering individual creative lessons, because according to the teachers students' past experience of learning English was not pleasant and consequently they dreaded learning English. For this, the teachers said that they approached the students with friendliness and understanding of their problems.
- Considering the education standard/ability of their students, teaching only what they can grasp from a particular lesson was the second element of the personal sense of teaching efficacy.
- The third element of English teaching efficacy was the courage or boldness of the teacher to decide what is beneficial to the students and to reject those that are not suitable to them. This involved confrontation with the educational personnel in favour of the students.
- The final element of English teaching efficacy was a conditional element i.e., the co-operation of the educational authorities with the teachers to exercise the three aforementioned elements of English teaching efficacy for the betterment of the students.

The English teaching efficacy which was exercised by the teachers in high-performing schools had two aspects:

- Enhancing students' communicative competence in English. To achieve this, the teachers reported that they tried to maintain their informal conversations with their students in and outside the classroom in English and encouraged them to participate in many English day competitions.
- Making students become more autonomous in learning by encouraging them to do activities in the textbook and past exam papers on their own but approach the teachers when they have difficulties in learning.

The comparison between low and high-performing schools revealed that the former had certain issues which appeared to be disadvantageous to the English teaching efficacy of the teachers there. Due to insufficient numbers of teachers in low-performing schools they had more workload than their counterparts. Unlike the teachers in high-performing schools, the teachers in low-performing schools, due to the absence of qualified teachers or sufficient colleagues were deprived of collegial support in their profession. Teachers in low-performing schools in villages and remote areas reported that they found it difficult to access the opportunities for professional development which were available in urban areas. They also often found the available resources did not address the needs of their teaching contexts. Unlike the teachers in high-performing schools, it was found especially from the lesson observations that the teachers in low-performing schools taught in noisy environments and with lots of classroom intrusions. The teachers in low-performing schools appeared to have struggled more than their counterparts in teaching English as their students found it very difficult to understand the textbooks. Finally a lack of motivation of the teachers in low-performing schools to perform their teaching appeared to have resulted from a lack of collegial support, and demand from the educational authorities in fulfilling the English language teaching regulations.

Regarding the interplay of problems in low-performing schools, two particular problems i.e., the problems related to the textbooks and the teachers' difficulty in fulfilling the learning needs of the students as they had very poor foundation in English in their primary classes interplayed. The gravity of these two problems

seemed to have been worsened as the parents appeared to be negligent about their children's development in learning English. The fourth problem which came to interplay was the lack of freedom of the teachers in considering students' learning needs in the first place. They were expected to follow the textbooks in view of preparing the students for the exam. It was also found that the interplay of these four problems along with the lack of English language exposure and the poor socio-economic background of parents was likely to have left a long lasting impact on the English learning of the students in low-performing schools. The interplay of two particular problems i.e., teaching in many different grades and teachers' various family commitments appeared to have impacted and contributed to an increase of workload of the teachers in the low-performing schools. The professional self-development of teachers in low-performing schools also seemed to have been affected by the interplay of two particular problems i.e., working as sole teachers of English in schools without any colleagues and the lack of opportunities in attending continuous professional development programmes.

Regarding the interplay of problems in high-performing schools, the aspect of creativity in the English lessons seemed to have been affected by the interplay of two particular problems such as the lack of materials and resources, and the excess number of students in the classroom. According to the data it was revealed that this situation was worsened by the interplay of two other problems such as the expectation of the school administration and parental demand for the teachers to prepare the students for the English exam. The lack of freedom for the teachers to use different teaching materials, and to comply with the prescribed textbooks appeared to have encouraged the teachers indirectly to ignore the aspect of creativity in their teaching, and this also seemed to have left a long-lasting negative impact on their teaching efficacy.

Based on Weiner's model of attribution, the current study found that the teachers of English particularly the teachers in low-performing schools attributed their perceived lack of effectiveness (by the principals, retired teachers and resource personnel of English) in English teaching primarily to many problems which were external to them. The study also found that the stability of the external causes which affected teacher effectiveness was high as they were interconnected and

had national implications and consequently they were out of the control of the teachers. Since the problems which caused the lack of teaching efficacy were external, stable and out of the control of the teachers, the teachers expressed hopelessness about the future enhancement in their English teaching efficacy. In order to improve effectiveness in English teaching, the teachers reported some behavioural changes in their teaching such as eliciting students' desire in English learning, teaching only what the students could understand and grasp, and taking bold decisions for the betterment of their students.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

This concluding chapter is divided into five sections. The first section presents the conclusions derived from the main study of the current research. The second section presents recommendations for teachers of English, the school administration and the authorities who are in-charge of English language teaching (ELT) at zonal and provincial Department of Education. Recommendations are also made for policy makers who can consider certain policy changes or policy implementations in relation to ELT at the national level. Section three discusses the contribution of the current study to the field of ELT particularly in relation to the teachers of English in the district of Jaffna. Section four evaluates the current study and the final section presents some recommendations for future research.

8.1 Conclusions of the study

In relation to the main research question as to how the teaching efficacy of the teachers of English is affected by various problems, it can be concluded from the teachers' perceptions that their efficacy in teaching English is affected in four different ways. It is affected by:

- Teacher related issues (7.1)
- Classroom problems (7.2 and 7.3)
- Lack of opportunities for teacher self-development (7.4)
- Inefficiency of educational authorities at various levels (7.5)

8.1.1 Teacher related issues

Teacher related issues here refer to teachers' daily classroom teaching, the work they bring home to continue such as marking students' work or non-teaching tasks given by the school and their personal household duties. According to the questionnaire and interview data provided by the teachers both in the low and the

high-performing schools, a conclusion can be drawn that the efforts the teachers need to make the English lesson more effective through daily lesson preparation is mainly prevented by teacher workload which is exacerbated by their parental duties at home. Both male and female married teachers found that they were unable to commit necessary time on lesson preparation due to a variety of household duties. The teachers also revealed that the exhaustion they experienced which was caused by teacher workload, and the lack of time they had due to various household duties, resulted in a small amount of preparation for the following day's lessons which affected its effectiveness.

The finding of the analysis of the current study is consistent with that of Ingvarson et al. (2005) in which the teachers, especially the female teachers, were dissatisfied with the balance between work and their private life. According to the views of the teachers, family commitments and the consequent problem of the lack of time affected more female teachers than the male teachers in the current study. They also found it difficult to control large classes; though it is not clear from the teachers' statements why more women than men found behavior management difficult. However they were able to complete the syllabus in time as they were occasionally engaged in non-academic tasks in the school. Since more male teachers took up non-academic tasks regularly they found it difficult to complete the syllabus in time. Hence, from the perceptions of the teachers revealed in the analysis, it can be concluded that the gender differences of the teachers were either helpful or detrimental to their teaching.

Further through the comparison of the low and the high-performing schools in the analysis it was concluded that the effectiveness of the English lessons in low-performing schools was affected by certain inevitable factors prevailing in those schools. One of the inevitable factors is the workload of the teachers due to the teacher shortage in Jaffna schools. Though the problem of workload was experienced by the teachers both in low and high-performing schools as mentioned above, in the case of the teachers in low-performing schools, as they revealed, teacher workload was exacerbated by teacher shortage as it was difficult to share the work among the limited number of teachers in the schools.

8.1.2 Various classroom problems

The majority of the teachers both in the low and the high-performing schools identified six major classroom problems. According to the perceptions of the teachers these problems affected their English teaching efficacy:

- i. Lack of teaching and learning resources in the classrooms
- ii. Excess noise of students from the neighbouring classrooms
- iii. Large numbers of students in the classrooms
- iv. Textbook related problems such as high English language content and lack of appropriate texts and activities for students in low-performing schools
- v. Being compelled to complete the textbook so students can sit the examination
- vi. Teaching the students who are far below the average standard to learn English.

In answering the question how these classroom problems affected the English teaching efficacy, the views of the teachers revealed that these problems left them in a state of inadequacy of teaching resources, an inappropriate learning environment, inappropriate learning materials and inadequacy of the expected English knowledge of students which was necessary for them to follow the curriculum.

Firstly, the teachers experienced a sense of inadequacy in terms of their teaching contexts which lead to the low performance of students (Warsi, 2004; Teenvo, 2011; Qasim & Arif, 2014). The first three problems can be connected to this sense of inadequacy of resources for the teachers in the classroom. The majority of the teachers both in the low and the high-performing schools reported that they had to manage their daily lesson with minimum resources in the classrooms. Regarding the excess noise of students from the neighbouring classrooms, the teachers were unable to experience a quiet learning environment which was considered necessary for effective teaching and learning. This was also evident in the comparison of the schools which showed that the excess noise of students became an inevitable unconducive teaching and learning environment more in the low-performing than the high-performing schools. Further, they found that the large number of students in the classroom created inadequate order and discipline

which challenged them to conduct the lessons smoothly (Khan, 2011; Asikhia, 2010). The learning resources were also found to be inadequate for all students working in groups and this therefore challenged the teachers in conducting effective English group activities with the students.

Secondly, the teachers especially in the low-performing schools experienced inadequacy in the English language curriculum in terms of fulfilling the various learning needs of their students. The fourth and the fifth classroom problems mentioned above did not help teachers address the various learning needs of their students adequately. The data provided by the teachers revealed that the high English language content of the textbook, the lack of appropriate activities for below average ability students and the stress experienced by teachers in completing the textbook within the stipulated time prevented the teachers from teaching the students with appropriate materials, paying more attention to individual students and spending more time on the learning areas where students needed more assistance.

Thirdly, the teachers in low-performing schools viewed the existing English standard of their students (problem six) as the result of an inadequacy in the implementation of the primary English language curriculum. The majority of them reported that so many basic needs of their students were not properly addressed in the primary schools. They were of the opinion that in most of the rural or village schools and even in suburban schools the primary English language curriculum including the Activity Based Oral English was not properly considered by the school administration. This was consistent with the study findings of Fernando and Mallawa (2003).

The above mentioned aspects of inadequacy experienced by the teachers lead to a further conclusion that elements of unequal provision of education (chapter two) are still prevailing in Sri Lanka. Though the Sri Lankan government provides equal rights to all citizens in accessing education (MoE, 2013), the inadequate elements experienced by the teachers in low-performing or small schools challenges the government's policies and commitment to equal educational rights. This study supports the findings by Karunaratne (2009) who found that while

1AB and National Schools have access to more material resources and qualified teachers, the other types of schools suffer deficiencies of such resources. He further notes that affluent parents are able to secure places for their children in prestigious schools while the children of the masses are left in poorly equipped rural schools.

8.1.3 Lack of opportunities for self-development of teachers

From the views of the teachers it can be concluded that their efficacy in teaching English was greatly affected by the lack of self-development opportunities in their teaching context. Teachers are deprived of opportunities to develop their English proficiency primarily due to the lack of English language exposure in classrooms, in the school environment (Karunaratne, *ibid.*) and in their social contexts (Liyanage, 2004). The teachers said that the opportunities for self-development in pedagogical knowledge are denied to the teachers both in the low and the high-performing schools because of the lack of context-specific reading materials on pedagogical issues. Moreover, many teachers in low-performing schools found, pedagogical development through the support, suggestions and insights of senior colleagues (Stoll, Harris and Handscomb, 2012) are not available to them as they are the sole teachers of English in their schools. According to the analysis which was done to compare the low and the high-performing schools, the lack of opportunities for self-development and the presence of unqualified teachers among the low-performing schools were inevitable factors prevailing in those schools to affect the effectiveness of the English lessons.

8.1.3.1 Teacher qualification

Regarding the teacher qualification it was concluded from the analysis that the absence of qualification of the teachers was likely to affect their teaching efficacy in many ways. First of all it was likely to give them a negative attitude about their ability that it was more difficult for them to prepare the daily lessons than the qualified teachers. It was found from the views of the teachers that the absence of a teaching qualification also created a lack of confidence among the teachers in handling large classes. Further it also affected the basic teacher belief that students needed to learn something useful for their lives rather than studying for

the exam alone. Finally it became detrimental to them as their principals, according to the data given by the teachers, seemed to trust the qualified teachers more than the unqualified teachers that the former would teach the students what was beneficial to them.

8.1.3.2 Length of time in profession and age group of teachers

From the analysis of data provided by the teachers from the Teacher Training Colleges (TTC) and those from the National Colleges of Education (NCOE), it was concluded that certain qualities of the teachers increased along with the length of their profession and their age. In the current study the teachers from TTC generally had more than fifteen years of teaching experience or were aged above fifty. They had certain qualities such as appreciating the positive aspects of the educational regulations, suggesting solutions to overcome challenges, being optimistic about the classroom realities, finding alternative ways to help their students and having courage to confront authorities for the sake of the good of the students. The teachers from the NCOE who had less than fifteen years of teaching experience and were less than fifty years of age were generally discouraged by their teaching contexts, getting along with problems without making much attempt to overcome them and had less concern about helping their low-performing students by arranging additional lessons after school or on weekends.

8.1.4 Inefficiency of educational authorities at various levels

It can be concluded from the current study that a number of issues related to English language teaching (ELT) fail to facilitate the teachers to enhance their teaching efficacy partly because of the inefficiency of the educational authorities (Hettiarachchi, *ibid.*). A number of issues reported by the teachers both in the low and the high-performing schools revealed the inefficiency of the educational authorities and consequently fail to bring about the expected results. The issues identified by the teachers:

- i. The absence of feedback on teachers' lesson preparation either by a competent teacher or by the in-service advisors (Wijesekera, 2012)
- ii. Conducting seminars and workshops for the teachers both in the low and high-performing schools together which, according to the teachers

in low-performing schools, do not cater for the issues specific to their teaching contexts

- iii. Conducting a number of seminars at the end of the academic year without proper planning but just to utilise the allocated funds etc.

Further, one particular English language teaching (ELT) issue can be associated with the inefficiency of the school administration i.e., teaching many classes in different grades. The teachers in high-performing schools had the opinion that in schools where more than one teacher is working the school administration need to consider (Ingvarson et al. 2005; Lambersky, 2014) allocating the number of classes within a smaller number of grades so that teachers can effectively deal with fewer textbooks. This also revealed the inefficiency of the educational authorities in deploying teachers according to the needs of the schools to avoid the shortage of teachers (Balasooriya, 2004 and 2013). The analysis through the comparison among the schools revealed that this inefficiency of the educational authorities became a demotivating factor for more teachers in the low-performing than the high-performing schools to perform in their profession. It was found from the teachers perceptions that when the teachers in low-performing schools did not receive proper feedback or benefits from the seminars through the inefficiency of the authorities they were unmotivated to perform well in their profession.

8.1.5 Teaching English effectively

Though the principals, resource personnel of ELT and the retired teachers of English identified some elements of effective teaching of English for the current teachers to implement in the classroom, the latter had developed their own sense of English teaching efficacy according to their teaching contexts.

The views expressed by the majority of the teachers in the low-performing schools on English teaching efficacy lead to the conclusion that it demands more autonomy in teaching (Sinclair, McGrath and Lamb 2000; Birdsell, 2010). The majority of the teachers in low-performing schools were of the opinion that the lesson preparation within a prescribed method such as the 5E method, did not do any good to their students as their ability for learning was very low. For them, the effective lesson preparation should lead to successful integration of the lesson

with the daily unexpected classroom situations. Hence they said that if their teaching efficacy was to make a significant change in the knowledge of students it should do so by teaching what students can grasp from a particular unit of the lesson or the textbook instead of doing the whole textbook with them.

The teachers in low-performing schools also reported that English teaching efficacy was not just delivering an interesting lesson or fulfilling all the administrative issues, rather it was to elicit a desire in the students towards the learning of English and to make bold decisions to implement primarily what was beneficial to students and reject whatever is irrelevant for them. Thus they conveyed a strong message that educational authorities instead of demanding co-operation from teachers with irrelevant and impractical English language teaching (ELT) regulations, they should allow teachers to practice teaching that is suitable to their students. They felt that teacher autonomy was urgently needed so as to make their teaching practice more effective and beneficial to their students (O'Hara, 2006).

In the case of the teachers in high-performing schools, they were of the opinion that English teaching efficacy was to make their students more competent in their English speaking ability. It can be concluded from their views that even though they were stressed by the issues of accountability (such as the expectation of the school and the Department of Education to complete the syllabus in time in view of the exam and the attitude of the parents to enable their children to perform well in the exam), they emphasised the practical value of the language to make students more communicative. This practical value of the English language was further affirmed by the views of a few teachers in high-performing schools who reported that English teaching efficacy was to make students autonomous (Little, nd) in learning so that they would develop their knowledge on their own which would help them maintain their interest in learning English even after their school education.

8.2 Recommendations

In the light of the conclusions drawn from the findings of the main study, this section presents some relevant recommendations to the teachers of English, principals and school administrations, educational authorities and policy makers who are in-charge of ELT at various levels. Most of the recommendations below highlight how they can implement or make the existing English language curriculum more specific to the local contexts which is considered an important contribution of the current study to knowledge (see section 8.3.1). The recommendations are categorised under four aspects such as teacher education, autonomy in teaching, efficiency and co-operation of school administration and ELT curriculum.

8.2.1 Teacher education

8.2.1.1 Professional qualification for teachers

A good number of teachers in schools in Sri Lanka designated as low-performing have a lack of qualification for teaching English (Stolyarova, 2011). Fifteen out of thirty-seven teachers in the low-performing schools in the current study did not have any professional qualification to teach English. Such teachers without a teaching qualification are received into teaching by the Ministry of Education (MoE) in order to tackle the pressing teacher shortage problem. Though they get opportunities to have in-service teacher training later, the annual intake of teachers for the teacher training programmes is very low as there are very few teacher training colleges in the country. The MoE needs to take necessary measures to train the current teachers who are without a teaching qualification as this will enable them to conduct more effective English lessons. Meanwhile the Departments of Education (DoE) need to provide such teachers with quality continuous professional development programmes in order to strengthen their teaching and English teaching skills.

Since the existing English curriculum failed to consider the local needs of the students (section 8.3.1), the presence of qualified teachers among the students in low-performing schools is urgently needed to fulfil their various learning needs.

The pedagogical capability of the qualified teachers will be more helpful than that of the unqualified teachers to provide the students with more context-specific English learning.

8.2.1.2 Continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers

In order to address the issues affecting the quality of the seminars or workshops in the CPD programme the DoE needs to consider choosing efficient resource personnel for guiding the teachers; where necessary, exclusive seminars or workshops for the teachers in low-performing schools need to be arranged in order to cater for the various issues specific to their teaching contexts. The effectiveness of the seminars can be enhanced if the teachers are consulted beforehand regarding the content of the seminars which could be based on the pressing needs of their teaching contexts.

While the educational authorities attempt to provide CPD programmes which can consider the specific needs of the teachers they can also make use of the contribution of the retired teachers of English in Jaffna. The retired teachers who practiced their teaching in the contexts of Jaffna can share their wealth of experiences and insights either through conducting seminars or writing articles on pedagogical issues which are more specific to the contexts of the current teachers.

8.2.1.3 School based teacher development (SBTD)

SBTD is an effective way to engage teachers in CPD (Boaduo, 2010; Boyd and Tibke, 2012). SBTD presupposes the aspect of collaboration which, in school settings, involves teachers who can work together to develop, plan and implement curricula and perform peer coaching (Scott and Miner, 2008; Ray, 2013). Many teachers in low-performing schools who were teaching as the sole teacher of English were deprived of pedagogical support from senior colleagues. This finding points to the need for teacher collaboration in developing their English teaching skills. If this is to happen this study recommends reviving the school-based staff development programme which was initiated by the Ministry of Education and the National Institute of Education in Sri Lanka in 2006 (ESDFP, 2007) but rarely implemented by schools. The success of reviving SBTD depends much on the principals. As an initial point of reviving the SBTD

principals can make sure that the teacher who participates in the seminars conducted by the Department of Education (DoE) conveys the content of the seminars to other teachers by conducting a peer coaching session in the school. Further, the principals can encourage senior teachers to revive this programme thereby novice teachers and teachers with a few years of teaching experience may benefit from the insights of experienced teachers.

SBTD, since it is operated independently by the school administration provides the teachers with opportunities to consider the needs of their teaching contexts. The teacher development provided by the Department of Education often fails to consider the teaching needs specific to a particular group of teachers as it include teachers both from low and high-performing schools. Hence, SBTD which includes only the teachers of a particular school or the neighbouring schools which share the same context can easily consider the problems and pedagogical needs specific to the context of the teachers.

8.2.1.4 Quality service from in-service advisors and other resource personnel

Petchprasert (2012) argue that feedback helps both the teachers and their students meet the goals in learning and teaching. In Sri Lankan contexts the feedback on teachers' work is largely ascribed to in-service advisors (ISAs) (Samaraweera, 2011). However, this study found that the teachers in Jaffna are generally not satisfied with the quality of service rendered by the ISAs. This study recommends that the educational authorities need to take necessary measures to regularise and update the service of the ISA service given to teachers, because the only available feedback and mentoring for teachers in rural and small schools is the guidance given by the ISAs. Further, in the light of the aspect of collaboration mentioned previously, the school administration can encourage senior teachers of English to be mentors for their junior colleagues. This study recommends that the school administration reduces the workload of senior teachers to enable them to enhance their involvement in mentoring new and less experienced teachers of English. It is also possible for the school administration to approach retired teachers to English to be mentors for practicing teachers.

In updating the service of the ISAs and other resource personnel, the educational authorities concerned need to instruct them to consider the local contexts of the teachers when they provide their feedback and other instructions. The ISAs have to be aware of the challenges faced by English teachers and the learning needs of the students so that they can provide context-specific help to the teachers in order to strengthen their English teaching.

8.2.2 Autonomy in teaching

Autonomy is related to the work of the teachers on the basis of the theoretical view that self-determination is central to internal teacher motivation (Birdsell, 2010). The teachers in the current research felt that they had a lack of freedom to be autonomous in matters related to the textbook, the lesson plan, the 5E method and the school based assessments. Sufficient autonomy needs to be given to the school administration and teachers in these situations to make necessary provisions in the English language curriculum in the interest of the students in low-performing schools.

8.2.2.1 Learning materials for below average students

The government policy of providing equal opportunity to learn English to the whole student populace throughout the country through the single textbook scheme needs to be reconsidered in favour of the students with low ability levels. The central Ministry of Education (MoE) needs to consider sharing its power regarding the educational publications with the provincial¹⁶ MoE. The suggestions and expectations of the teachers working in rural schools and teaching below average students need to be considered in developing the curriculum.

Supplementary learning materials need to be made available to teachers so that they can choose suitable materials according to the level and needs of their students. In addition, teacher education programmes need to pay more attention to the aspects of material adaptation which will help teachers adapt the textbook to suit the level of their students. Further, Tamil teachers or experts need to be

16. See footnote 14.

included in the textbook writing panels so that they may include in the textbooks the contents that are related to Tamil students' social, cultural and religious backgrounds. The Tamil teachers in the textbook writing panel also can avoid the excessive use of the social, cultural and religious contents of other communities such as Sinhala and Muslims which are unfamiliar to and likely to demotivate Tamil students from learning English.

The use of the single textbook for all the students, as discussed in section 8.3.1 is one of the elements which keeps the existing English curriculum less context-specific to the students and teachers. As discussed above, introducing alternative or supplementary textbooks to students in low-performing schools or increasing the balance of the aspect of multiculturalism in the existing textbooks will make the current English curriculum more specific to the local Tamil students and teachers.

8.2.2.2 ELT programme for the primary and secondary students

In relation to the previous recommendation about context-specific teaching and learning materials, a more context-specific English language programmes is highly recommended. The teachers in low-performing schools reported that the English learning needs of the students were so basic that they should have been addressed in the primary school. Mallawa and Fernando (2003) whose study argued that Activity Based Oral English (ABOE) in Sri Lanka was a failure suggest that the training given to primary teachers on ABOE needs to be improved. Hence, the policy makers need to reconsider the level of importance given to the English language programme with regard to primary students especially in remote or village schools. The ABOE programmes which is implemented among the qualified teachers and high learning level students in the urban high-performing schools cannot be expected to be suitable to the unqualified teachers and low learning level students in remote schools. In order to consider the local needs and contexts of the teachers and students a more relevant English language programme for the primary students and a more effective training for the primary teachers of English is required.

The current study revealed that the English as a second language curriculum for the secondary students failed to develop their speaking skills. It also failed to achieve the national objectives such as functioning as a link language between members of different ethnic groups and preparing the younger generation for the modern job market to develop Sri Lanka's economy (De Mel, 2001 in Karunaratne, 2003). Hence, the current study recommends that the Ministry of Education needs to take necessary measures to introduce all four language skills in the curriculum especially for the following reasons: Sri Lanka which has been experiencing a peaceful situation since the final war in 2009, needs to strengthen the existing peace by maintaining a rapport between the major ethnic groups. This rapport can be established by students learning to speak in a link language i.e., English. The number of students who go abroad for their higher studies in foreign universities is increasing every year. The English language teaching (ELT) curriculum at schools needs to help such students by providing better and sufficient language proficiency. If the current English language curriculum needs to consider the contextual needs of the students, that is to say to enhance their English communicative competence to enable them to have better job prospects or high studies opportunities, the curriculum needs to include all four language skills. Finally the ELT which includes all four language skills will motivate the teachers to enhance their language proficiency.

8.2.2.3 Practicality and relevancy of English language teaching (ELT) regulations

Teachers' autonomy needs to be increased so that they can make use of suitable methods to prepare and conduct their lessons and evaluate students' performance regularly (so as to meet the DoE curriculum and examination expectations) while doing away with what they find to be irrelevant or impractical to their classroom contexts. Meaningful work enhances the person's job satisfaction work motivation (Michaelson et al., 2014). An extensive evaluation on the appropriateness and usefulness of the ELT regulations such as the lesson plan, the 5E method and the school based assessments needs to be carried out by the authorities concerned with the teachers, students and principals. This evaluation of the aspect of appropriateness of the ELT regulations may consider the contextual identities of the teachers, students and principals such as cultural,

religious and ethnic issues. This would help the policy makers to consider various issues regarding the implementation of those regulations in the future. The educational authorities need to realize here that the current ELT regulations remain irrelevant or impractical as they are not specific to the contexts of the students and the teachers. Hence the evaluation of the use of these regulations needs to discuss how they can be adapted to the local needs of the teachers and students and thereby enable them to have more effective English teaching or learning.

8.2.3 Efficiency and co-operation of school administration

8.2.3.1 Efficiency of school administration in matters of teachers of English

The Sri Lankan school administration needs to consider the personal circumstances of the individual teachers teaching in both low and the high-performing schools. This study found that married teachers with heavy parental duties and other home responsibilities were allocated too many classes or classes with an excessive number of students. Also that in some schools the workload of married teachers working as the sole teachers of English was exacerbated by their home responsibilities. There is therefore a need for more teachers and a reduction in teacher workload which will facilitate a better work-life balance, for all teachers. For this the school administration needs to become more efficient by being proactive in liaising with the educational authorities so as to get the required number of teachers, which according to the number of students in each school, will not only reduce teacher workload but also provide for a good teacher-student ratio. Schools with larger numbers of teachers mean that there are more teachers to teach smaller sized classes, which is essential if students are to benefit from greater teacher support when learning English.

Principals can be supportive of teachers by releasing them from their non-teaching responsibilities which create an additional workload, and seeking assistance from single teachers who (on the basis of the findings of this study) are likely to have less home responsibilities than married teachers. However, the school administration needs to consider the personal and classroom circumstances of single teachers also. This requires the school administration to make some efforts

to know the personal circumstances, preferences, commitments and resources of its staff so that it can make convenient timetables and allocate suitable responsibilities to teachers to enable them to engage in more effective English teaching.

8.2.3.2 Optimum use of available resources in schools

The optimum use of the available resources in schools is hindered as teachers found it difficult to access them easily within the short duration of the lesson. This problem can be solved by allocating two consecutive lessons for English in the timetable once a week. Such a lesson will provide double the duration (eighty minutes) of a single lesson to teachers and students to utilise it in group activities with a variety of learning aids in the activity room. The school administration needs to take this into consideration when lessons are allocated to teachers in the timetable.

8.2.3.3 Fair teacher deployment and transfers

Shortage of teachers, not only for English but also for other subjects in rural and village schools in Sri Lanka is found to be the result of inefficiency or corruption of competent authorities related to teacher deployment and transfers (TISL, 2009). This causes teacher shortage on the one hand and on the other hand creates the over population of teachers in certain areas especially in urban schools (Balasooriya, 2013). These problems need to be addressed so that students may benefit from a sufficient teacher workforce. Sufficient numbers of teachers in schools will increase the work performance of the teachers and also provide opportunities for pedagogical collaboration among the colleagues (Berry, Daughtrey and Wieder, 2009; Patel and Herick, 2011).

As section 8.2.1.1 above emphasizes the presence of qualified teachers among the students of low-performing schools in remote areas to consider the local needs of the students, the fair teacher deployment and transfers not only provide sufficient teachers but efficiently consider the learning needs of the students in their local contexts.

8.3 Contribution to knowledge

The current research makes some important contributions to knowledge. The contributions add new insights and knowledge to the existing knowledge regarding English language teaching (ELT) specifically in the district of Jaffna where research in the secondary education level is conducted very rarely. Hence the contributions have the potential to help principals, teachers, resource personnel for the English subject, policy makers and researchers to know the issues that are helpful and detrimental to the effective teaching of English for students in high and low performing secondary schools in Jaffna.

The current study makes a contribution to knowledge in five ways. **Firstly**, the study contains new knowledge and insights about Sri Lankan teachers' efficacy in Jaffna. In the preliminary study of the current research, the principals, resource personnel of English language teaching (ELT) and retired teachers of English proposed five elements of effective teaching of English such as daily lesson preparation, creative teaching, fulfilling various learning needs of students, self-development of the teachers and co-operating with the ELT regulations. They proposed them and believed that these elements of effective teaching were very necessary to enhance students' English competence. However, the teachers of English in the study argued and proposed different aspects of English teaching efficacy according to their teaching contexts (see section 7.6). They identified their teaching efficacy with eliciting desire in students towards English, teaching only what students could understand and grasp, taking bold decisions for the sake of their students, demanding the co-operation of the educational authorities to be effective in teaching, enhancing students' communicative competence and making students autonomous in learning. These new insights of the teachers about their English teaching efficacy challenge the educational authorities and policy makers to revisit and update their ideas on ELT. This is salient as the aspects of effective teaching of English proposed by the principals, resource personnel of English language teaching (ELT) and retired teachers of English for all teachers in Sri Lanka were found to be similar to what had been previously identified in the literature. For example, good lesson preparation and presentation (Brosh, 1996;

Shishavan and Sadeghi, 2009), English language proficiency (Park and Lee, 2006; Chin and Lin, 2009; Fernando and Mallawa, 2003; Karunaratne, 2009; Wijeratna, 2002), and pedagogical knowledge of English teaching (Cochran, 1997; Brown, 2009; Perera, 2001). However, the insights on teaching efficacy revealed by the teachers of English in this study are totally different and new as they considered those new insights according to their own location (e.g. rural, village and urban areas), personal circumstances (e.g. married/single) and teaching contexts in high and low performing schools. This contribution to knowledge is very important as it can potentially urge the educational authorities, policy makers as well as future researchers on effective teaching of English in Sri Lanka to consider these aspects of teaching efficacy. It will also be very helpful to the teachers of English in Sri Lanka, but particularly Jaffna as it can encourage them to evaluate their own teaching as to what aspects of teaching efficacy they practice in the classroom or to what extent the above mentioned aspects facilitate them to conduct more effective teaching.

The **second** contribution to knowledge is the need of a more context-specific English language curriculum which can be considered to have been informed by the new insights of the teachers of English in this study on teaching efficacy.

The study revealed the need for a context-specific English language curriculum for Tamil students, and in particular for Tamil students in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. This new knowledge gained during the preliminary and main study from the views of the students and the teachers through the questionnaire and teacher interviews and from the evidences observed during the classroom lessons. Literature on effective second language teaching (e.g. Prabhu, 1990; Freeman and Johnson, 1998; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Borg, 2006 and Lee, 2010) emphasise that the second language teaching methods or the second language teachers should consider the contextual aspects of the students. hooks (1997) and Nieto (2003) highlight the need for teachers to be aware of their teaching context including the cultural background of the students so that they are able to teach what the students deserve and desire. The current study showed in many ways that the teaching of English as a second language in the Sri Lankan mainstream education system has failed to

consider the contextual needs of the students and teachers in Jaffna. The student and teacher perceptions and the observed evidences in the classrooms revealed that many aspects (explained below) of the existing English curriculum had the same less context-specific content and thereby affected the learning of the students, especially those in the low-performing schools.

The educational history of Sri Lanka clearly shows that right from the beginning the English language curriculum has been catering mainly for the affluent student populace of the society (section 1.1. of Chapter One). Karunaratne (2009) argues that in spite of numerous attempts to make English available to all citizens in Sri Lanka, it still remains a marker of the higher social classes rather than a language of everyone. The information given by the students and teachers of the current study suggests that the reason that English still remains a marker of the affluent is because the English curriculum has not been made specific to the contexts of the non-affluent student populace. Certain national level issues keep the English language curriculum unspecific to the various school and geographical contexts as exemplified as follows:

- a) The single textbook scheme prevents village students from accessing appropriate learning materials – the student questionnaire (section 2 of 6.1.2) and the lesson observations (section d) of 6.2.2.1) clearly revealed that students in low-performing schools found the textbook difficult to understand. It was observed by the researcher that during the lessons the teachers either explained the whole texts and activities in Tamil or skipped certain portions which were very difficult for the students.
- b) The exam oriented English language curriculum destines both low and high level ability students to strive for the same exam – section 7.3.1.1 of Chapter Seven explained how the teachers both in low and high-performing schools were primarily expected by the educational authorities and parents to follow the textbook in order to prepare the students for the exam. The teachers expressed their views that they were unable to consider the aspect of creativity of the lessons or the learning needs of the

students as the school administration emphasized that teachers finish the syllabus in time to prepare the students for the exam.

- c) English language teaching (ELT) regulations failed to consider their relevancy or practicality to the contexts – section 7.5.1.1 of Chapter Seven revealed the perceptions of the teachers in the questionnaire and interviews how certain ELT regulations such as writing the lesson plan and conducting the lessons in the 5E method, and conducting regular school-based assessments were irrelevant or impractical to their teaching contexts.
- d) Distribution of resources among schools undermined the schools with poor socio-economic background - it was revealed from the information (table 1.1/appendix-1) gathered by the researcher about the village schools that participated in the current study that there were disparities in distributing the learning resources among the schools.
- e) During the lesson observations, the researcher observed (*table 31* of section 6.2.1) that the classrooms in small or village schools were exposed to the high noise level of students from the neighbouring classrooms. This was because the classrooms were arranged in open halls.
- f) The national policy of English as a link language does not do any good to Tamil students in Jaffna as the Northern province of Sri Lanka has been monolingual due to the civil war for the last thirty years – section 2.1.2.4 of Chapter Two explains that people of ethnicities other than Tamil moved from the North to other parts of Sri Lanka because of the civil war and consequently Jaffna remained with the Tamil population alone till the war was over. According to the teacher perceptions in the questionnaire and interviews (sections from 7.4.1.1 to 7.4.1.3) there was a lack of English language exposure in the classroom, school and social contexts. Such situations did not help the students and teachers to get any benefits from English as a link language as it has not enhanced their acquisition and/or proficiency in English, as evidenced by the fact that the Tamil teachers in

the low performing schools in the study were primarily teaching English through the medium of Tamil.

According to the perceptions of the teachers certain issues are not contextualized due to the lack of decision making power of the Provincial Ministries of Education. This includes: teacher education, continuous professional development (CPD) programmes and English foundation provided to students in primary schools.

Making the existing English language curriculum in Sri Lanka more context specific is possible only by sharing the power and increasing the involvement of the local English teacher representatives at various levels such as policy formulation and implementation, curriculum development, textbook writings and development of teacher education programmes. The views of the teachers (section 7.5.1.1) in the current study revealed that there is a vast gap between the teachers and the high level authorities who propose and implement various policies in ELT. The study emphasizes the support of the government (local and national) which is needed to reduce this gap by allowing the participation of the local (Jaffna) teacher and minority Tamil community in the concerned areas of education. This will empower the local teacher workforce to make the existing English language education/curriculum more context-specific. The participation of the local teachers in the concerned areas of education can be considered as a bottom-up process which can take into consideration the teaching/learning needs of the local teachers and students and through bringing an understanding of the circumstances (home, school, social, political) through which students come to learn English this will help teachers of Jaffna to produce more proficient English speakers.

Thirdly, the study findings adds significantly to the literature in Sri Lanka which has sought to address the problems of ELT such as the problems that demotivate students in learning English (Perera et al., 2010) and the inefficiency of the educational authorities which demotivates the teachers of English in their profession (Hettiarachchi, 2010). The current study investigated in-depth how these challenges have their impacts on English teaching efficacy in Jaffna. It adds

new knowledge that the lack of teachers in village schools is a demotivating factor not only to the students (Perera et al., 2010) but also to the teachers themselves as their teaching efficacy is affected in the event of two circumstances: one, when the lack of teachers resulted in the sole teacher of English being assigned to a school she/he had to cover all the grades (from Grade Six to Eleven) in the secondary school. This increased their workload as they had to deal with six different textbooks daily. Two, the shortage of the teachers in Jaffna resulted in the absence of collegial support to teachers. When the teachers taught as the sole teacher of English, they were deprived of the opportunities to develop their pedagogical knowledge through the insights and suggestions of their colleagues. They also lacked the collegial support in fulfilling the English language teaching regulations.

The issues of the inefficiency of the educational authorities at the school and the Department of Education such as having negative attitudes towards the teachers, burdening them with extracurricular activities and being indifferent or slow to act on issues related to teacher transfer (Hettiarachchi, 2010) revealed much more information in the current study. According to the current study, the school administration failed to facilitate the teachers of English by creating efficient or convenient timetables to make the English lessons more effective. The administration increased the teachers' burden by allocating English classes to them in all six grades (from Grade Six to Eleven) instead of allocating the classes within fewer grades, which would have given the teachers more time to spend teaching English to the students. The current study also adds new knowledge that the authorities at the Department of Education became inefficient as they often conducted poor quality Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes. Their inefficiency also included conducting a number of CPD programmes at the end of the academic year without considering the teachers' heavy workload and also conducting the programmes commonly for the high and low-performing school teachers without considering the special needs of the latter. The current study also revealed that Department of Education often conducted CPD programmes at weekends and in urban areas, thus excluding teachers with family commitments and those who lived in rural, village areas.

Fourthly, the study adds new knowledge about the attribution theory to the field of ELT in Sri Lanka. By incorporating attribution theory in order to explain the research problem, the study provides researchers with new knowledge that this theory is useful to understand educational issues such as the behaviours of teachers and educational authorities, their perceptions and criticism.

Understanding the perceptions of the teachers of English and the blame levelled against them by the educational authorities through the attribution theory in the current study is the very first attempt in the Sri Lankan educational contexts to do so. Further, understanding the characteristics of the attributions the teachers made, with the help of Weiner's model is quite important in the current study. It is important because Weiner's model of attribution helped the researcher not only to understand the attributions made by the teachers, but also revealed the consequences such as the emotional responses and the behavioural changes of the teachers outlined in Chapter Seven. Hence this contribution is new and unique. One of the advantages of attribution theory is, by aiding a more informed interpretation of teaching situations the theory can help education authorities and policy makers to see the core of the problem and thereby should enable them to suggest necessary recommendations (including policy, curriculum, teacher education and CPD changes) to address the problems identified, and not just attribute blame for low student performance in English on teachers. In addition, by understanding why teachers were blamed for the poor English performance of Sri Lankan students through attribution theory, it may also encourage future researchers to consider this theory as a useful way of understanding and analysing their research.

Finally, the study adds new knowledge that the teachers in Jaffna generally face similar problems and challenges in their teaching contexts whether their students are high or low ability learners. It was revealed in the current study that the teachers in high-performing schools found certain options concerning teacher efficacy in the questionnaire were related to their teaching contexts, but in practice they found themselves in the same teaching and learning situations as the teachers in low-performing schools because of government expectations of teachers following the textbook and preparing students for their English exams. One might

expect teachers in high performing schools which have advantages (including higher performing students from affluent backgrounds and with access to additional English resources), to not experience similar difficulties to teachers in low-performing schools, but this study found as argued by the teachers in high-performing schools, that in practice they faced the same problems and challenges as the teachers in low-performing schools. The perceptions of the teachers in Jaffna challenge the general assumption, particularly of the parents that high-performing or prestigious schools provide more problem-free learning environments to their children and thus aid their English language proficiency. While the perceptions of the teachers in Jaffna contribute this new knowledge, the findings reported here urge researchers to investigate whether the same situations and experiences prevail for teachers of English in other parts of Sri Lanka.

8.4 Evaluation of the study

As said in the methodology (5.1.1.2) mixed methods research (MMR) was employed to investigate the research problem from more than a single point of view as it (research problem) is related to a complex reality of the Sri Lankan education system. Quantitative and qualitative research instruments (questionnaire, interview and lessons observation) gathered information from the teachers including what problems they frequently encountered in the classrooms and how these problems affected their English teaching efficacy. In the current study the questionnaire as a quantitative instrument helped the researcher to have general information from a wider circle of the sample. However, an in-depth knowledge of the questionnaire information was made possible for the researcher through the teacher interviews. The researcher observed that in most cases there was consistent response between the questionnaire and interview information provided by the teachers in low-performing schools. However, on a number of occasions the researcher observed that the teachers in high-performing schools did not agree with those in low-performing schools on certain issues in the questionnaire, but agreed with them on the same issues in the interviews. Harris and Brown (2010) say that the complexity of the construct being investigated is

one of the reasons for the problems in aligning data from two different methods. The complex situation was that the teachers in high-performing schools found certain options in the questionnaire were related to their teaching contexts but in practice they found themselves in the same situations as the teachers in low-performing schools. Harris and Brown (2010) say that strong alignment may lead to the loss of rich complementary data. Hence, the methodology worked well as this study has achieved its objective that is to understand teacher perceptions of how their teaching efficacy of English was affected by various problems in the classroom and in their overall teaching contexts.

Regarding the participants of the current study, the number of teachers who participated in the main study interview was small. This means it is not possible to project a wider perspective regarding the problems that affected the English teaching efficacy of teachers. Further, the preliminary and main studies were conducted among Tamil students and teachers in the district of Jaffna and hence its findings may not mirror the experiences of the Tamil students and teachers in other districts of Sri Lanka. However, since the educational contexts and their problems and the socio-cultural, economic and political situations of the districts where Tamil people live are more or less the same, the findings derived from the quantitative data of the study have more possibility for generalisation.

As already said in the methodology chapter, when selecting the classrooms for distributing the student questionnaire or for observing the lessons in the preliminary study, the principals had the tendency to suggest the classrooms with better performing students or the classrooms with more experienced teachers. This limited the chances of accessing the classrooms with more underperforming students or the classroom with less experienced teachers.

A number of teachers and a few principals and resource personnel who participated in the current study were already known to the researcher and hence that might have impacted on the data they gave; it means they might have avoided some negative aspects or defects of their own teaching or administration fearing that such information might create a bad impression on them. Moreover, there were instances where the insider status of the researcher as a former teacher in

Jaffna was prone to have more subjective interpretation of the data. It was also possible that the participants were inclined to be brief in their description at times as they might have taken the insider status of the researcher for granted.

However, the familiarity between the researcher and some participants was likely to help the latter provide necessary information with trust.

Most of the interviews in the main study were conducted via telephone and the researcher had to rely totally on what he heard without being helped by the sight and the body language of the participants. This prevented the researcher from seeing whether the participants conveyed more reliable information or they answered for the sake of formality.

The information sheet for the teacher participants in this study explained to them that the current study sought to understand the problems of “the ineffectiveness of the English language curriculum in the mainstream education of Sri Lanka with special reference to Tamil students and teachers in Jaffna”. It was written in this way to convey the research in its simplest terms. It is noted however, that the use of the wording ‘the problems of the ineffectiveness of the English language curriculum in the mainstream education of Sri Lanka’ and with ‘special reference’ to Tamil teachers creates an ethical issue as it could be argued that the use of such phrasing undermined and prejudged the ability of the Tamil teachers in Jaffna in teaching English before they actually took part in the study. Clearly, this was not the intention. All interpretations of the teachers’ abilities with regard to teaching English were solely informed by the experiences and views they shared through their questionnaire and interview responses. Another ethical issue raised by the wording on the participant information sheet concerns the willingness of the teachers to actively participate in the research, which may have been affected by the wording on the information sheet as it might be understood to cast doubt on their ability to teach English effectively. However, prior to, during and after participation in the research none of the teacher respondents raised this as a concern, and no one declined to be involved in the study because of what was written on the participant information sheet. It is likely that the teachers who were invited to participate in the research agreed to participate because the majority of the teacher participants identified the researcher not only as a researcher but also

as a former teacher of English in their own teaching contexts. Since the researcher himself had undergone various challenges and problems related to English language teaching in the Jaffna context, there was a likelihood that when the study was explained to the potential participants and volunteers sought that the teachers may have considered the concept of ineffectiveness raised by the researcher was as a result of his own English teaching experiences whilst in Sri Lanka. However, as none of the teacher respondents questioned the use of the term ineffectiveness in the research or declined to participate because of its use, any potential ethical impact on respondent participation in the study can only be assumed.

8.5 Recommendations for future research

A number of issues related to the Sri Lankan education system were referred to in order to understand the research problem that was investigated in the current study. Some of those issues need to be investigated in greater depths as they are closely connected to the teaching efficacy of the English education provision in Sri Lanka. This section includes recommendations for future action and research. The recommendations, where possible, include the aspect of context-specific English language curriculum to be considered in future research attempts.

- Though the principals, resource personnel and retired teachers of English expressed their own views on different elements of effective teaching of English, the views of the current teachers especially those in the low-performing schools, as expressed in section 7.6 (Part I/Chapter Seven), were different and based more on their classroom experiences. A more in-depth study needs to be undertaken with a larger number of teachers in low-performing schools in order to know the recurring patterns of English teaching efficacy which they practice in their classroom contexts. Such an in-depth study may suggest to the policy makers what changes can be made in the curriculum or what reforms can be introduced in favour of the students in low-performing schools. In addition the in-depth study may investigate whether the elements of English teaching efficacy which are practiced within a given English curriculum contribute to make that English curriculum more specific to the context.
- Considering the distinction between teacher efficacy and teacher effectiveness and the lack of familiarity among the Tamil teachers of

English about the concept *teacher efficacy*, a research study can be conducted among the teachers to investigate their understanding of the concept. The study can be used not only to give an awareness on teaching efficacy but also to enlighten them that teacher efficacy can motivate them and thereby encourage them to deliver more effective teaching.

- The opinions of the teachers of English at the secondary level, especially those who teach in Grade Six to Nine, would need to be investigated to understand how they view the standard of English attained by primary level students who transition to the secondary schools. The opinions of secondary teachers could then be analysed against the views of those teachers who teach English at the primary level to see what issues need to be considered and what can be recommended to address those issues if students are to become competent in using English.
- More intervention research needs to be carried out in classrooms to see how students engage in English language learning when more appropriate and a variety of materials other than the textbook are used in the classroom. The variety of materials need to be more specific to the socio-economic and cultural context of the students. Further, their performance in the English examinations could then be compared with that of the students who used only the textbook for their English lessons. This kind of intervention research may demand that the teachers choose learning materials suitable to the contexts of the students in order to enable them to have more context-specific learning.
- In relation to the problem of the lack of material resources in the classroom and difficulties in accessing the resources in the activity room, a study could be designed to study the attitude of the school administrations towards the task of the teachers of English and their contribution in making the quality input available and accessible to the teachers of English and their students. The study could also address the willingness and ability of the teachers to use the quality input in their daily teaching. In addition the study may investigate another aspect, i.e., how the joint action of the school administration and the teachers (the administration supplies resources and the teachers make use of them) supports the learning needs of the students and thereby makes the English curriculum more specific to the contexts of the students.
- There is also a need to investigate the quality of teacher development programmes for teachers of English. The study could investigate teachers' views on peer coaching or collaboration and the culture of schools which may encourage senior teachers of English to become mentors for novice

and less experienced teachers. Further the study may probe whether or to what extent the mentors guide young teachers to contextualise the lessons in the classroom.

8.6 Conclusion

Though the Sri Lankan education authorities were of the opinion that the failure of English language teaching (ELT) in Sri Lankan schools could be partly attributed to the lack of effectiveness of the teachers of English, the classroom experiences of the teachers in this study have emphasised that the teacher effectiveness in ELT needs to be understood primarily in relation to various classroom, political and socio-economic problems. The views of the teachers not only voiced the problems they faced in their English teaching efficacy, but also revealed how they interpreted their personal sense of English teaching efficacy according to their teaching contexts. The views of the current teachers on English teaching efficacy are different from the views of the educational authorities and the retired teachers of English. This needs to be considered by the educational authorities in order to help the teachers exercise the aspects of English teaching efficacy which they believe to be beneficial to their students. This will help them implement teaching which is appropriate to the needs of students in their classes, and which will be conducive to enhancing Tamil student competence in English.

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Appendix-1: Information on schools and the research context

Table 1.1 Information on low-performing schools which participated in lesson observations and student questionnaire

	LPSs* 1	LPSs 2	LPSs 3	LPSs 4	LPSs 5
Types of schools	1AB (P)**	1AB (P)	1C	Type II	1C
Location of schools	Sub-urban	Urban	Village	Village	Sub-urban
Students' gender	Girls	Boys	Mixed	Girls	Mixed
Number of students in the school	Around 1600	Around 2000	Around 900	Around 400	Around 500
Grades	1 -13	1 - 13	6 - 13	6 - 11	6 - 13
Number of English teachers for secondary classes	3 teachers	4 teachers	2 teachers	1 teacher	2 teachers
Average number of students in classes	30-35	35-40	25-30	20	20
Official enrolment of students in the observed classroom	30	31	23	21	25

Pass rate of students in O/L English in 2011	37%	34%	7%	10%	11%
Socio-economic status of students	Mixed – students from high & low socio-economic backgrounds	Mixed – students from high & low socio-economic backgrounds	Most students from low socio-economic background	Most students from low socio-economic background	Most students from low socio-economic background
Learning facilities	Activity room with necessary facilities	Activity room with some facilities	No activity room	No activity room	No activity room
Learning environment	Noisy	Noisy	Very Noisy	Very Noisy	Very Noisy
English-day competitions	- School and students much interested - Annual English-Day celebration	School and students not much interested	Some students participate in competitions	Some students participate in competitions	Some students participate in competitions

*= Low-performing schools

**= Provincial School

Table 1.2 Information on high-performing schools which participated in lesson observations and student questionnaire

	HPSs* 1	HPSs 2	HPSs 3	HPSs 4	HPSs 5**
Types of schools	1AB (N)***	1AB (N)	1AB (P)****	1AB (P)	1AB (P)
Location of schools	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban
Students' gender	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Girls
Number of students in the school	Around 2300	Around 2000	Around 2000	Around 1600	Around 1200
Grades	6 -13	6 - 13	1 - 13	1 - 13	6 - 13
Number of English teachers for secondary classes	7 teachers	5 teachers	5 teachers	4 teachers	3 teachers
Average number of students in classes	40	40	35-40	35	35-40
Official enrolment of students in the observed classroom	44	41	37	35	33

Pass rate of students in O/L English in 2011	97%	95%	80%	88%	82%
Socio-economic status of students	Most of the students from affluent family backgrounds	Most of the students from affluent family backgrounds	Most of the students from affluent family backgrounds	Most of the students from affluent family backgrounds	Mixed – students from high & low socio-economic backgrounds
Learning facilities	Activity room with necessary facilities	Activity room with necessary facilities	Activity room with necessary facilities	Activity room with necessary facilities	A small activity room with some facilities
Learning environment	Less Noisy	Less Noisy	Less Noisy	Quieter environment than other schools	Less Noisy
English-day competitions	- School least interested - Students too not much interested	- School and students much interested - Annual English-Day celebration	- School and students much interested - Annual English-Day celebration	- School and students much interested - Annual English-Day celebration	Some students participate in competitions

*= high-performing schools

**= The school did not participate in students questionnaire

***= National School

****= Provincial School

Table 1.3 Presents information on a low-performing school which did not participate in the lesson observation but in the student questionnaire.

Table 1.3 Information on a low-performing school which participated in student questionnaire

Type	Location	SG	NSS	G	English teachers for secondary classes	ACS	ONSC	O/L %	Socio-economic status of students	LF	LE	English-day competitions
Type II	Village	Mixed	Around 900	1 -11	2 teachers	20-25	25	3%	Most students from low socio-economic background	A small activity room with some facilities	Very Noisy	School (the principal) much interested and hence some students participate in competitions

N.B: The exact numbers of students in the schools are avoided here in order to maintain the anonymity of the schools.

SG = Students' gender

O/L % = Pass rate of students in O/L English in 2011

NSS = Number of students in the school

LF = Learning facilities

G = Grades

LE = Learning environment

ACS = Average class size

ONSC = Official number of students in the classroom

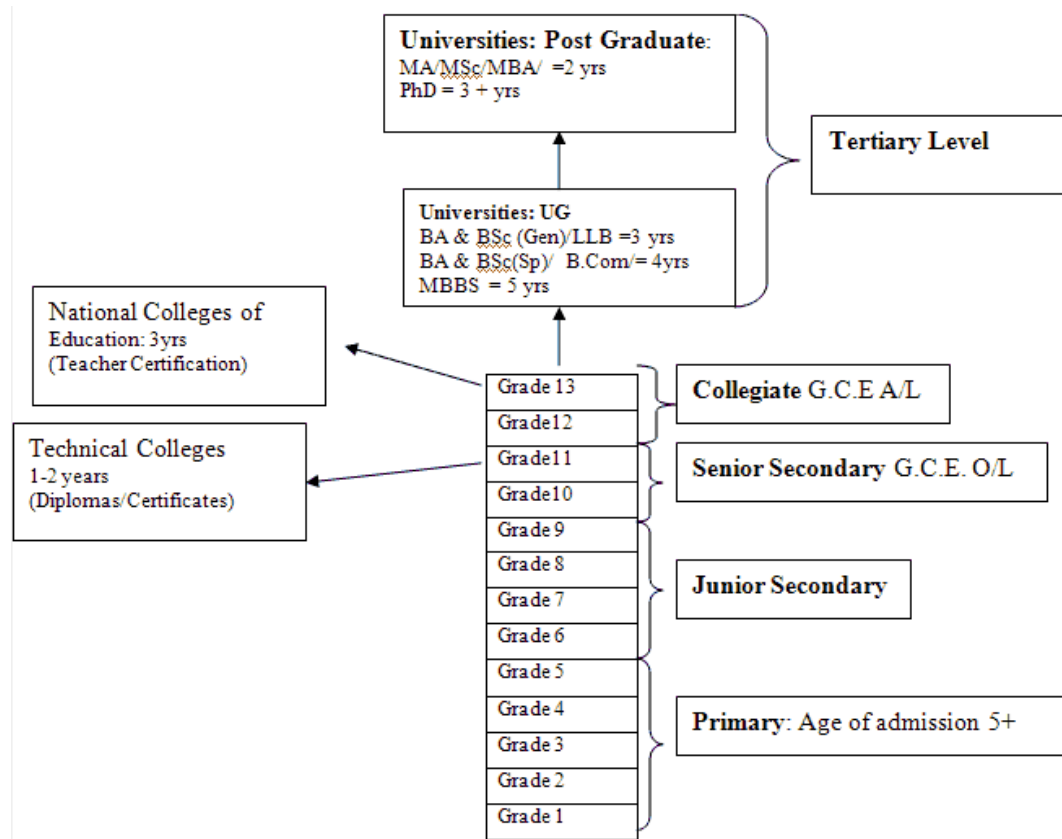
Table 1.4 Characteristics of different types of schools

	1AB	1C	Type II
Sub-category	National Schools are the sub-category of certain 1AB schools. The government declares some 1AB schools as National Schools under certain criteria.	Certain 1C schools are designated as National Schools but not in Jaffna (in other parts of Sri Lanka)	Types II schools are very rarely designated as National Schools.
Governance	Governed by provincial councils (National Schools are governed by the central government)	Governed by provincial councils (National Schools are governed by the central government)	Governed by provincial councils (National Schools are governed by the central government)
Location	Mostly in urban and sub-urban areas	Mostly in urban and sub-urban areas	Mostly in villages and rural areas
Grades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grades either from 1 – 13 or 6 -13 with Science streams for A/L students - Each grade divided into 4 or 5 divisions (classes) due to large number of students - Certain 1AB schools (in Jaffna) have separate divisions in each grade for bilingual students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grades either from 1 – 13 or 6 -13 without Science streams for A/L students - Each grade divided into 2 or 3 divisions (classes) due to less number of students - Bilingual education is rare in 1C schools (in Jaffna) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grades either from 1 – 11 or 6 -11 (up to O/L) - Each grade mostly has a single division or sometimes 2 - No bilingual education in Type II schools in Jaffna
Classrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overcrowded classrooms or classrooms with large number of students - Classrooms with minimum teaching and learning resources - Congested classroom due to large number of students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Classrooms with less number of students - Classrooms with minimum teaching and learning resources - Less congested classrooms due to less number of students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Classrooms with small number of students - Classrooms with minimum teaching and learning resources - No congested classrooms due to small number of students

	1AB	1C	Type II
Staff	- Mostly qualified teachers - Shortage of teachers is not a frequent issue	- Presence of unqualified teachers is a common feature - Shortage of teachers is a normal issue	- Presence of unqualified teachers is a common feature - Shortage of teachers is a normal issue
Non-teaching staff	Generally there are sufficient non-teaching staff	Non-teaching tasks are mostly done by teachers	Non-teaching tasks are mostly done by teachers
Resources	Generally more resources than other types of schools	Less resources than 1AB schools	Lack of resources
Infrastructure	Generally better infrastructure than other types of schools	Generally found in fair state	Generally identified with poverty or low socio-economic state of the locality
Basic facilities	Generally found in good state	Generally found in good state	Mostly found in poor state
Library	Generally 1AB schools have libraries with necessary books for teachers and students	Some schools have small libraries	Most of the schools do not have libraries
Socio-economic state of students	Mixed – students both from high and low socio-economic background can be found here but majority of them are from affluent families	Mixed, but majority of them are from low socio-economic background.	Mostly from low socio-economic background
Extracurricular activities	Schools and students generally show much interest in extracurricular activities	Schools and students generally show interest in extracurricular activities	Less involvement of students in extracurricular activities due to lack of human (teachers) and material resources

NB: Though there are four types of schools (1AB, 1C, Type II and Type III) in Sri Lankan education system, the above table presents the characteristics of the first three types of schools as the current research dealt only with these three types of schools.

Figure 1.5: Current education system in Sri Lanka



(Source: http://www.fulbrightsrilanka.com/?page_id=609)

Figure 1.6: Map of Sri Lanka showing the nine provinces



(Source: http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/sri_lanka_map.htm)

Figure 1.7: Map of the Northern Province of Sri Lanka showing the district of Jaffna where the current research took place



(Source: <http://www.mapsofworld.com/sri-lanka/provinces/northern-map.html>)

Appendix-2: Templates for data collection tools

2.1 Information sheet for student participants in questionnaire

**University of Bedfordshire
Institute of Research in Ed.
Polhill Avenue
Bedford MK41 9EA
United Kingdom**

Addressing the problems of ineffectiveness of the English language curriculum in the mainstream Education of Sri Lanka with special reference to Tamil students and teachers in Jaffna. (working title)

I would like to invite you to participate in a doctoral research project as I am recruiting students who are learning English in grade 10 in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish, especially with your teachers who teach you English. Please do ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

The aim of this research is to study various factors that contribute to or affect the effectiveness of the English language curriculum for secondary Tamil students in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. This study does not deal with the level of your ability or intelligence to learn English. Instead it deals with the suitability of the language curriculum for teaching and learning in the context where Tamil students are learning English. Besides, this study aims to provide some suggestions and recommend earlier research findings to help your teachers conduct more effective English teaching lessons.

In the event that you agree to participate in this research, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire, which will be handed out to you by me; this will be anonymous. It should take you approximately 40 minutes to complete. As participation is anonymous it will not be possible for you to withdraw your data **once you have returned your questionnaire**. A completed and returned questionnaire, as it does not carry your name or any of your identification, cannot be traced by whom it has been completed and hence cannot be withdrawn. Submission of a completed questionnaire implies consent to participate. In

addition to the questionnaire, a few lessons in which you learn English will be observed by the researcher. The purpose of the lesson observation is not the evaluation of your performance in English learning but to observe how the lessons are conducted and what classroom problems the teachers undergo during the lessons.

Researcher details: Mahan Aloysius

Email: mahan.alloysius@beds.ac.uk

This study is bound by the ethical expectations of the University of Bedfordshire, UK and hence if this study has harmed you in any way you can contact the same university using the details below for further advice and information:

Prof. Trevor Corner

Email: trevor.corner@beds.ac.uk

2.2 Information sheet for parents whose children participated in questionnaire

**University of Bedfordshire
Institute of Research in Ed.
Polhill Avenue
Bedford MK41 9EA
United Kingdom**

Addressing the problems of ineffectiveness of the English language curriculum in the mainstream Education of Sri Lanka with special reference to Tamil students and teachers in Jaffna. (working title)

This is to inform you that I would like to invite your child to participate in a doctoral research project as I am recruiting students who are learning English in grade 10 in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. Your child should only participate if you want to; not allowing your child to take part will not disadvantage your child in any way. Before you decide whether you want to allow your child to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your child's participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish, especially with the teachers who teach English to your child. Please do contact me (details given below) if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

The aim of this research is to study various factors that contribute to or affect the effectiveness of the English language curriculum for secondary Tamil students in Jaffna,

Sri Lanka. This study does not deal with the level of your child's ability or intelligence to learn English. Instead it deals with the suitability of the language curriculum for teaching and learning in the context where Tamil students are learning English. Besides, this study aims to provide some suggestions and recommend earlier research findings to help teachers of your child so that they can conduct more effective English teaching lessons.

In the event that you agree to allow your child to participate in this research, s/he will be asked to complete a questionnaire, which will be handed out to s/he by me; this will be anonymous. It should take your child approximately 40 minutes to complete. As participation is anonymous it will not be possible for your child to withdraw data s/he gives **once s/he has returned the questionnaire**. A completed and returned questionnaire, as it carries no name or any kind of identification of the participant (i.e. your child), cannot be traced by whom it has been completed and hence cannot be withdrawn. Submission of a completed questionnaire implies your consent on behalf of your child to participate. In addition to the questionnaire, a few lessons in which your child learns English will be observed by the researcher. The purpose of the lesson observation is not the evaluation of the performance of your child in English learning but to observe how the lessons are conducted and what classroom problems the teachers undergo during the lessons.

Researcher details: Mahan Aloysius

Email: mahan.alloysius@beds.ac.uk

Telephone number: (to be added later)

This study is bound by the ethical expectations of the University of Bedfordshire, UK and hence if this study has harmed your child in any way you can contact the same university using the details below for further advice and information:

Prof. Trevor Corner

Email: trevor.corner@beds.ac.uk

2.3 Consent form for parents to get their children's involvement in the research project

University of Bedfordshire
Institute of Research in Ed.
Polhill Avenue
Bedford MK41 9EA - UK

Addressing the problems of ineffectiveness of the English language curriculum in the mainstream Education of Sri Lanka with special reference to Tamil students and teachers in Jaffna. (working title)

Tick in the space next to the statement you agree with

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project. _____

I understand that my child's participation in the questionnaire and the lesson observation is voluntary. I understand that my child is free to withdraw at any time before returning the questionnaire to the researcher, without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should my child not wish to answer any particular question or questions, s/he is free to decline. _____

I give permission for the researcher to have access to the anonymised responses of my child. I understand that my child's name will not be linked with the research materials, and s/he will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research. _____

I understand that my child's responses will be kept strictly confidential.

I agree for the data collected from my child to be used in relevant future research.

I agree to allow my child to take part in the above research project and will inform the researcher should my child's contact details change.

Name of Participant:
Contact details of Participant:
Signature of Participant's Parents:
Date:
Name of Researcher:
Signature:
Date:

Tick the answer that is more appropriate to you/ write answer in given spaces

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12. What is the medium of instruction your teacher usually uses to teach you English?
 English only ()
 English supplemented with occasional Tamil explanations ()
 Half English and Half Tamil () Mainly Tamil ()
13. Which one of the following is the most used strategy for learning English in your classroom?
 Reading texts & doing activities in the textbook ()
 Taking part in group activities ()
 Learning vocabulary () Learning grammar rules ()
 Taking part in oral activities ()
 Doing exercises on grammar ()

Tick the number that corresponds to the degree of frequency with the statements listed on the left (1= always; 2= often; 3= sometimes; 4= rarely; 5= not at all)

	1	2	3	4	5
14. Our English lesson is based on the textbook					
15. I find it difficult to understand the textbook					
16. We do individual tasks during the English lesson					
17. We do pair activities during the English lesson					
18. We do group activities during the English lesson					
19. Our teacher uses different materials other than the textbook					
20. Our teacher takes us to the English activity room					
21. My English teacher is keen in preparing us for the exam					
22. I read English books, magazines or newspapers at home					
23. I watch English news or some English programme in the TV					
24. I have opportunities to listen to elders speak English in my social contexts					

25. What do you expect from your English teacher regarding learning English in the classroom?

.....

2.5 Information sheet for teacher participants in questionnaire

University of Bedfordshire
Institute of Research in Ed.
Polhill Avenue
Bedford MK41 9EA
United Kingdom

Addressing the problems of ineffectiveness of the English language curriculum in the mainstream Education of Sri Lanka with special reference to Tamil students and teachers in Jaffna. (working title)

I would like to invite you to participate in a doctoral research project as I am recruiting teachers who are teaching English to grade 10 students in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please do ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

The aim of this research is to study various factors that contribute to or affect the effectiveness of the English language curriculum for secondary Tamil students in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. This study does not deal with the quality of your teaching. Instead it deals with the suitability of the language curriculum for teaching and learning in the context where Tamil students are learning English. Besides, this study aims to provide some suggestions and recommend earlier research findings to help teachers conduct more effective English language teaching.

In the event that you agree to participate in this research, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire, which will be handed out to you by me; this will be anonymous. It should take you approximately 40 minutes to complete. As participation is anonymous it will not be possible for you to withdraw your data **once you have returned your questionnaire**. A completed and returned questionnaire, as it carries no name or any kind of identification of the participant, cannot be traced by whom it has been completed and hence cannot be withdrawn. Submission of a completed questionnaire implies consent to participate.

Researcher details: Mahan Aloysius

Email: mahan.alloysius@beds.ac.uk

This study is bound by the ethical expectations of the University of Bedfordshire, UK and hence if this study has harmed you in any way you can contact the same university using the details below for further advice and information:

Prof. Trevor Corner

Email: trevor.corner@beds.ac.uk

2.6 Consent form for teachers

University of Bedfordshire
Institute of Research Ed.
Polhill Avenue
Bedford MK41 9EA - UK

Addressing the problems of ineffectiveness of the English language curriculum in the mainstream Education of Sri Lanka with special reference to Tamil students and teachers in Jaffna. (working title)

Tick in the space next to the statement you agree with

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project. _____

I understand that my participation is voluntary and am free to withdraw at any time before returning the questionnaire to the researcher without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.

I give permission for the researcher to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research. _____

I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential.

I agree for the data collected from me to be used in relevant future research.

I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the researcher should my contact details change. _____

Name of Participant:

Contact details of Participant:

Signature of Participant:

Date:

Name of Researcher:

Signature:

Date:

2.7 Questionnaire for Teachers who teach English in the Secondary Sections of the State Schools in the District of Jaffna

Section 1: About yourself *(please underline or write the answer)*

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age:
3. Marital status: Single Married
4. Your highest academic qualification:
5. Your professional qualifications:
6. How many years have you been teaching English?
7. The type of school you are teaching:
National school, 1AB, 1C, Type II
8. The average number of students in your classrooms:
Less than 20, 20-25, 25-30, 30-35, 35-40, 40-45,
More than 40
9. How many periods (altogether) are you teaching English per week?
10. Are you the only teacher who teaches English (from Gr 6-11) in your school? Yes No

Section 2: Pedagogical Problems in ELT

In this section you have been given a list of several pedagogical problems which you may encounter in your classroom. Please underline the problems which you encounter very frequently.

Teaching without teacher training
Lack of motivation of students
Teaching with lack of fluency in language
Lack of language exposure for students outside the classroom

Overcrowded classrooms
Noise from neighbouring classrooms
Lack of co-operation among teachers
Lack of resources in the classroom
Single textbook for all types of students
Exam based curriculum
Lack of appreciation of authorities
Lack of support from the principal
Additional work demanded by department of education
Students benefited by tuition classes
Slow learners
Extracurricular activities

If you think that you have some pedagogical problems which are specific to your context but not included in the above list, please mention them below

.....
.....
.....
.....

Section 3: Socio-economic Problems in ELT

In this section you have been given a list of some socio-economic problems which you may encounter in relation to your daily classroom teaching. Please underline the problems which you encounter very frequently.

Low salaries for teachers
Low educational background of parents
Family commitments of teachers
Negative attitudes of parents towards English
Lack of language exposure for students in their social contexts
Low economic background of parents

If you think that you have some socio-economic problems which are specific to your context but not included in the above list, please mention them below

.....
.....
.....
.....

Section 4: Political Problems in ELT

In this section you have been given a list of some political problems which you may encounter in relation to your daily classroom teaching. Please underline the problems which you encounter very frequently.

Shortage of teachers

Implementation of new programmes by the Ministry of Education

Teacher transfers through political influence

Students affected by war

If you think that you have some political problems which are specific to your context but not included in the above list, please mention them below

.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your participation

2.8 Lesson Observations - Physical settings of the classroom

School:

Teacher:

Grade:

Date of Visit:

Visit No:

Lesson began at:

Finished at:

Total number of students: Boys: Girls:

Students attended: Boys: Girls:

Location of the school: Urban: Suburban:
 Rural: Village:

Socio-economic background of students:

Well-off: Poor:
Moderate: Mixed:

Students are

Sitting in rows:

Sitting In groups:

Teacher

Stands in front of students:

Moves around

The classroom is

Fully separated:

Compartmentalised in a hall:

Congested:

Spacious enough:

Located in a place which is

considerably noisy:

too noisy:

less noisy:

Classroom walls are covered with posters of

English vocabulary:

English phrases:

Other:

Facilities

Equipped with blackboard and chalk:

Equipped with white board and marker:

Equipped with a cupboard with necessary teaching/learning materials:

Equipped with computer:

Equipped with overhead projector:

Other:

Remarks:

2.9 Lesson Observations – Human settings of the classroom

1) The Teacher

Friendly:

Stern:

Approachable:

Uses the target language

Always:

Most of the time:

Uses the L1

Always:

Reasonably:

2) Students

Enthusiastic:

Bored:

Responding:

Not responding:

Use the L1

Always:

Sometimes:

Not at all:

Use the target language

Most of the time:

Difficult to use

Take efforts to use:

3) Teaching approach

More teacher-centred:

More student-centred:

Based on individual tasks

Different tasks:

Same tasks:

Based on group tasks

Different tasks:

Same tasks:

4) Activities

Reading:

Writing:

Speaking:

Listening:

Role-play:

Vocabulary:

Grammar:

Other:

5) Materials

Textbook:

Different materials:

Authentic texts:

Audio materials:

Visual materials:

Remarks:

2.10 Interview questions for the principals, retired teachers of English and resource personnel of ELT in the district of Jaffna

Interview questions for principals

1. From your experience with teachers of English and their work in the classroom and also with the performance of students in English subject, what can you say about the teaching efficacy of the teachers of English language?
2. How can teachers of English make their lesson more effective?

Interview questions for retired teachers

1. In the light of your past experience of being a teacher of English and your experience with the performance of students in English subject, what can you say about the need of better teaching efficacy for the teachers in the current English language curriculum?
2. How can the current teachers of English make their lesson more effective?

Interview questions for resource personnel of ELT

1. In the light of your past experience of being a teacher of English and your current experience of being a resource person to the present teachers of English what can you say about the need of better teaching efficacy for the teachers in the current English language curriculum?
2. How can the present teachers of English make their lesson more effective?

2.11 Information sheet for teacher participants in questionnaire

**University of Bedfordshire
Institute of Research in Ed.
Polhill Avenue
Bedford MK41 9EA
United Kingdom**

Addressing the problems of English language teaching and learning in

Sri Lanka: how they affect teachers' efficacy (working title)

I would like to invite you to participate in a doctoral research project as I am recruiting teachers who are teaching English from grade 6 to 11 students in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please do ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

The aim of this research is to study how various classroom and other related problems affect the teaching efficacy of the teachers who teach English as a second language to the secondary school Tamil students in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. This study does not deal with the quality of your English teaching. Instead it deals with the problems which prevent teachers from being effective in English teaching. Besides, this study aims to provide some suggestions and recommendations to the current teachers of English to help them conduct more effective English language teaching.

In the event that you agree to participate in this research, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire, which will be handed out to you by my colleague. This will be anonymous. It should take you approximately 40 minutes to complete. As participation is anonymous it will not be possible for you to withdraw your data **once you have returned your questionnaire**. A completed and returned questionnaire, as it carries no name or any kind of identification of the participant, cannot be traced by whom it has been completed and hence cannot be withdrawn. Submission of a completed questionnaire implies consent to participate. In addition to the questionnaire, you may also be invited to

participate in an in-depth interview session if you wish. If you wish you can give your consent by ticking the appropriate section in the consent form and the researcher will contact you through the details you provide there.

Researcher details: Mahan Aloysius

Email: mahan.alloysius@beds.ac.uk

This study is bound by the ethical expectations of the University of Bedfordshire, UK and hence if this study has harmed you in any way you can contact the same university using the details below for further advice and information:

Prof. Trevor Corner

Email: trevor.corner@beds.ac.uk

2.12 Consent form for teachers

**University of Bedfordshire
Institute of Research Ed.
Polhill Avenue
Bedford MK41 9EA - UK**

Addressing the problems of English language teaching and learning in Sri Lanka: how they affect teachers' efficacy (working title)

Tick in the space next to the statement you agree with

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project. _____

I understand that my participation is voluntary and am free to withdraw at any time before returning the questionnaire to the researcher and/or my responses given in the interview are transcribed for use in the final report by the early part of 2014, without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. _____

I give permission for the researcher to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research. _____

I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential.

I agree for the data collected from me to be used in relevant future research.

I wish to participate in the in-depth interview session also _____

I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the researcher should my contact details change. _____

Name of Participant:

Contact details of Participant:

Signature of Participant:

Date:

Name of Researcher:

Signature:

Date:

2.13 A Questionnaire for Teachers who are teaching English to secondary students in state schools in the district of Jaffna

Dear teacher,

**Addressing the problems of English language teaching and learning in Sri Lanka:
how they affect teachers' efficacy**

It is a common experience of teachers of English that they are criticized by others that they are not efficacious enough in teaching the language. But teachers argue that they are unable to conduct effective lessons because of various problems and challenges.

During the initial study of this research in Jaffna, I interviewed some principals, professionals of English language curriculum and retired teachers of English. They suggested some aspects of English teaching efficacy and shared their views how current teachers of English can become more effective in teaching.

What are the suggested aspects of English teaching efficacy?

Among many ideas, the following 5 ideas were found to be important elements of English teaching efficacy

1. Teachers need to prepare their lessons daily
(teachers need to spend some time every day to prepare themselves what and how they would teach)
2. Teachers need to be more creative in teaching
(by using available resources and skills, teachers need to prepare and deliver interesting lessons in order to motivate their students in English learning)
3. Teachers need to fulfill students' learning needs
(teaching the textbook and preparing students for the exam alone is not enough; they also need to teach what their students really need and like to learn)
4. Teachers need to develop themselves continually as English teachers
(teachers need to develop their personal English knowledge through self-study and also need to learn how to conduct effective lessons [pedagogical knowledge] by talking with their colleagues or reading some materials etc.)
5. Teachers need to cooperate with ELT regulations and various administrative issues related to English teaching
(teachers need to write their notes of lessons and conduct lessons in 5E method, write scheme of work, keep record of work, conduct SBAs, attend seminars etc.)

With the above concepts, this questionnaire has been designed to investigate how various problems in ELT affect the aspects of the teaching efficacy of the teachers of English. Please be kind enough to take some time to answer this questionnaire. Your kindness is your contribution to the growth of our present and future students. Thank you.

Section 1: About yourself (please underline or write the answer for sections 1 & 2)

- | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|----------|--------|----------------|--------|----|
| 1. Gender: | Male | Female | | | | |
| 2. Age: | below 25, | 25-30, | 31-35, | 36-40, | 41-45, | |
| | 46-50, | above 50 | | | | |
| 3. Marital status: | Single | Married | | | | |
| 4. Your highest academic qualification: | | | | | | |
| | A/L | Diploma | BA | MA | | |
| | Other (specify) | | | | | |
| 5. Did you have your highest academic qualification in English medium? | | | | | | |
| | A/L | Yes | No | Diploma | Yes | No |
| | BA | Yes | No | MA | Yes | No |

6. Your professional qualifications (Underline all that apply):

Teachers' Training Certificate, College of Education

Postgraduate Diploma in Education

Other (please specify).....

7. How many years have you been teaching English?

8. I became an English teacher because (you may underline more than one answer)

- a) it was my ambition from my school days
b) it was unexpected
c) it was my parents' wish
d) my friends too selected this job
e) it was my last resort
f) other (please state).....

Section 2: Your teaching context

1. **The type of school you are teaching:** National school, 1AB, 1C, Type II
2. **The Grades you are teaching English (underline all that apply):**
Gr. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
3. **The average number of students in your classrooms:**
Less than 20, 20-25, 25-30, 30-35, 35-40, 40-45,
More than 40
4. **The students you are teaching:** Boys Girls Mixed
5. **How many lessons (altogether) of English are you teaching per week?**
6. **Are you teaching any other subjects along with English?** Yes No
7. **Are you the only teacher who teaches English (from Gr 6-11) in your school?**
Yes No
8. **School climate:** pleasant moderate unpleasant
9. **School administration:** lenient moderate very strict
10. **Salary:** satisfied moderate unsatisfied

Section 3: Challenges to your English teaching efficacy

The challenges are various classroom problems and certain socio-economic and political problems which are related to the classroom problems.

There are 7 main questions with Yes or No options in this section and they distributed under the five aspects of English teaching efficacy. Each main question has several statements as its answers. According to the option (Yes or No) you tick, choose appropriate statements and tick the number (1 to 5) to show the degree of your agreement with those statements. Tick all the statements that apply. If you find any statements not applicable to you, just leave them blank.

The degree of agreement is:

1= strongly agree; 2= agree; 3=neither agree nor disagree 4= disagree;

5= strongly disagree

(to make it easy for you, the statements in non-italics may be appropriate if you choose ‘Yes’ and the statements in *italics* may be appropriate if you choose ‘No’)

Daily lesson preparation:

1. Is it difficult for you to spend time to prepare your lessons daily? Yes () No (), because	1	2	3	4	5
a)I don't have enough time due to my family commitments					
b)I generally have lots of students' work for correction					
c)I teach many classes (eg. grades 6, 8, 10 and 11)					
d)Sometimes I need to do non-teaching tasks given by the school administration					
<i>I don't need much time as I am familiar with lessons</i>					
<i>I teach only few classes</i>					
<i>I have got enough time to do my lesson preparation</i>					
<i>I didn't need much time as my students were in good standard of English</i>					
If you have more appropriate reason(s) or any comments, please state here briefly:					

Conducting creative lessons:

2. Is it difficult for you to deliver interesting lessons to your students in the classroom? Yes () No (), because	1	2	3	4	5
a)I am teaching without teacher training					
b)My lessons are disturbed by the noise from the neighbouring classrooms					
c)There is a lack of material resources in the school					
d)A good amount of time is spent on controlling my overcrowded classrooms					
e)The duration of the lesson is not enough					
f)It is difficult to have group activities due to a large number of students					
g)I become tired of teaching many classes					

<i>I have got a small number of students in my classrooms</i>					
<i>I am teaching with teacher training</i>					
<i>My classroom is located in a quiet place</i>					
<i>I have a good command in English language</i>					
<i>My students have positive attitudes towards learning English</i>					
<i>I can easily access necessary material resources (audio/video, etc.)</i>					
If you have more appropriate reason(s) or any comments, please state here briefly:					

Fulfilling students' learning needs:

2. Is it challenging for you to teach your students what they really need to learn? Yes () No (), because	1	2	3	4	5
a)I am expected to follow the textbook					
b)I am supposed to prepare students for the exam through the textbook					
c)It is difficult to fulfil different needs of all students					
<i>My principal supports me to teach what I decide is beneficial to my students</i>					
<i>I believe that students should learn something useful for their life rather than studying only for the exam</i>					
<i>They find it easy to learn what they need as the textbook is too high for them</i>					
If you have more appropriate reason(s) or any comments, please state here briefly:					

3. Do you generally teach your students only what the curriculum expects of you? Yes () No (), because	1	2	3	4	5
a)I am expected to coach students to produce better results for the school in the public exams					
b)It is easy to do so as students are motivated towards the exam					
c)The time is limited to teach the official curriculum only					
d)It is the primary concern of the parents that teachers should follow the textbook/curriculum in view of exams					
e) Students are not motivated to learn more than what they need					
<i>I have enough time to teach additional things to my students</i>					
<i>My principal supports me to teach what I decide is beneficial to my students</i>					
<i>My students show interest in learning more than what is in the curriculum</i>					
If you have more appropriate reason(s) or any comments, please state here briefly:					

Self-development of teachers:

i. *Developing the knowledge of English language*

4. It is difficult for you to spend time to develop your personal knowledge of English? Yes () No (), because	1	2	3	4	5
a)Time is limited due to lots of work (eg: lesson preparation, homework correction, family commitments etc.)					
b)If I speak to my colleagues in English to develop my personal knowledge of English, the teachers of other subjects do not welcome such situations					
c)Lack of English language exposure in the school environment					
d)Opportunities (availability of English newspapers or English programmes on Radio or TV or speaking to someone who knows English) are scarce					
<i>I haven't felt the need of it</i>					
<i>I am confident with my current knowledge of English</i>					
<i>I am expected by the school administration to promote English speaking in the school</i>					
<i>English language exposure in the school environment is high</i>					
If you have more appropriate reason(s) or any comments, please state here briefly:					

ii. *Developing the pedagogical knowledge of English*

5. Do you find it difficult to take efforts to develop your pedagogical knowledge? Yes () No (), because	1	2	3	4	5
a)I cannot ask advice from my colleagues as they are very busy					
b)My principal does not allow me to attend seminars always due to shortage of teachers					
c)I don't have access to reading materials to develop my pedagogical knowledge					
d)I don't have time for it due to my personal commitment (eg. Studying for higher study)					
e)I am discouraged when I think of other well-paid jobs in the private sector					
<i>I really like my teaching profession</i>					
<i>There are experienced English teachers working with me</i>					
<i>My principal encourages me to participate in all seminars/workshops</i>					
<i>I am confident with my current pedagogical knowledge</i>					
If you have more appropriate reason(s) or any comments, please state here briefly:					

Co-operating with ELT regulations

1. Is it difficult for you to co-operate with the ELT regulations of the school administration (eg: writing notes of lessons/lessons plan/record of work/scheme of work/giving regular assignments to students [SBA] etc.)? Yes () No (), because	1	2	3	4	5
a)They are additional work to my normal teaching					
b)I don't get any feedback on them					
c)I am overburdened with many programmes (eg. English as a life skill)					
d)I don't see the impacts of these regulations on my classroom teaching					
e)I am frustrated in teaching					
<i>I find them helpful in my teaching</i>					
<i>They helps me to be more organized in my teaching</i>					
<i>I can easily get the help of my fellow English teachers in this matter</i>					
<i>I don't follow these regulations as the school administration doesn't care of it</i>					
If you have more appropriate reason(s) or any comments, please state here briefly:					

The End of Questionnaire. Thank you for your co-operation.

N.B: The first sets of statements under each main question were not indicated with alphabets in the original teacher questionnaire as they have been indicated here. They have been indicated so in order to map them against various problems identified in the preliminary study as presented in the next section (2.14).

2.14 Problems mapped against questions in teacher questionnaires

Table 2.1: Questionnaire questions related to various problems

Problems teachers faced	Question number in teacher questionnaire
Pedagogical problems	
Teaching without teacher training	2.a)
Overcrowded classrooms	2.d), 2.f)
Noise from neighbouring classrooms	2.b)
Lack of resources in classrooms	2.c)
Exam based curriculum	3.a), 3.b), 4.a), 4b)
Lack of motivation of students	4.e)
Lack of English language exposure outside classrooms (within schools)	5.c)
Lack of co-operation among teachers	5.b), 6.a)
Lack of support from principals	6.b)
Workload related problems	1.b), 1.c), 1.d), 2.g), 6.a), 7.a)
Textbook related problems	3.a), 3.b), 4.d)
Problems caused by discouragement in teaching	6.e), 7.e)
Practical problems	2.e), 4.c)
a) Insufficient duration of lessons	3.c)
b) Students with different basic learning needs	2.f)
c) Difficulty in having group activities due to large number of students	
Socio-economic problems	
Low salaries for teachers	6.e)
Family commitments of teachers	1a), 5.a), 6.d)
Lack of English language exposure to students in their social contexts	--
Attitudes of parents towards English	4.d)

Exam results orientation of parents	3.a), 3.b), 4.d)
Negative attitude of students in learning English	4.e)
Political problems	
Shortage of teachers	6.b)
Implementation of new programmes by Ministry of Education	7.c)
Opportunities for teacher development were scare due to civil war	5.d), 6.c)
Lack of resources for teachers to enhance English competency	5.d)

2.15 Information sheet for teacher participants in interview

University of Bedfordshire
Institute of Research in Ed.
Polhill Avenue
Bedford MK41 9EA
United Kingdom

Addressing the problems of English language teaching and learning in Sri Lanka: how they affect teachers' efficacy (working title)

Thank you for your participation in my postgraduate doctoral research project through the questionnaire. I would also like to invite you to participate in the same research project through a semi-structured interview. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. By participating in the questionnaire already, you are well aware of the purpose and the aim of my research project. The purpose in conducting an interview is to get different and further views, which will help me as the researcher to get more detailed information than the questionnaires alone can provide.

The semi-structured interview will last around 60 minutes. Should you agree to participate in the semi-structured interview, this will be recorded, subject to your permission. Recordings of interviews will be deleted upon transcription, and the transcription anonymised. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. A copy of the findings of this research will be made available should you wish to see the final report.

It is up to you to decide whether to take part or not. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason up **until it is transcribed for use in the final report by the early part of 2014.**

Researcher details: Mahan Aloysius

Email: mahan.alloysius@beds.ac.uk

This study is bound by the ethical expectations of the University of Bedfordshire, UK and hence if this study has harmed you in any way you can contact the same university using the details below for further advice and information:

Prof. Trevor Corner

Email: trevor.corner@beds.ac.uk

2.16 Interview questions for teachers in low and high-performing schools

The purpose of this interview is to investigate how various classroom and related socio-economic and political problems affect or influence your English teaching efficacy. There are so many ways and means to teach a lesson effectively in the classroom. However, for the current research the principals, resource personnel of ELT and retired teachers of English who participated in the preliminary study interview sessions suggested few aspects of English teaching efficacy. They are:

1. Daily preparation of lessons
2. Creative delivery of lessons in the classroom
3. Fulfilling students' various learning needs
4. Self-development of teachers (development of English knowledge and pedagogical knowledge)
5. Co-operation with ELT regulations

1) Daily lesson preparation

The interview participants suggested that good lesson preparation is a basic requirement for a lesson to be effective. They felt that current teachers of English do not give due importance to lesson preparation or their preparation remains shallow. However, the current teachers have so many problems and challenges in preparing their lesson daily. As a teacher of English what is (are) your main problem(s) in preparing your lessons daily? Or don't you experience any problems? What is the problem that affects your daily lesson preparation primarily or frequently?

2) Creative Delivery

It was suggested in the interview that teachers need to deliver interesting lessons to students in the classroom. They said that students lose their interest or become unmotivated in learning English when teachers simply go through the textbook. They suggested that teachers can make use of available resources, their own talents and abilities to add some aspect of creativity to the lesson in order to increase students' interest or desire in following the lesson. What are the frequently encountered classroom problems in delivering your lessons with creativity?

3) Fulfilling students' various learning needs

By fulfilling students' various learning needs, the interview participants meant that teachers cannot be satisfied with only preparing the students for the exam by going through and finishing the textbook according to the scheme of work, instead they should see what their students really need or like to learn and fulfil their needs so that they can learn something useful for life. Hence as a teacher of English are you able to see students' various needs and fulfil them? What does mainly prevent you from fulfilling students' various learning needs?

4) Self-development of teachers

The interview participants said that current teachers of English do not take necessary effort to update themselves. They said that teachers have to develop themselves continuously so that their lesson may be effective. They proposed two different aspects of self-development: one is developing the English language proficiency and the other is developing the teaching or the pedagogical knowledge of the English language. Teachers generally have many formal ways to develop themselves such as attending language courses, attending seminars or workshops, following a teacher training course etc. However the interview participants primarily stressed the need for teachers to take constant personal efforts in their day-to-day lives through informal ways such as reading or listening something to improve their English knowledge, seeking the advice of senior teachers or peer colleagues or reading some articles to know the latest developments in teaching of the English language etc. Do you spend time on such things? Do you really feel the need for developing yourself? What circumstances or challenges or difficulties in your daily life discourage you to spend time in developing your English knowledge and pedagogical knowledge about ELT?

5) Co-operation with ELT regulations

Finally the interview participants suggested that teachers' co-operation with certain regulations related to ELT as an aspect of effective teaching of English. By this they meant the regulations laid down by the Department of Education such as writing the notes of lesson, conducting the lessons in the 5E method, writing the scheme of work and keeping the record of work, conducting regular School Based Assessments to students, attending seminars and workshops regularly etc. Do you fulfil those regulations in your school? What is your opinion about those regulations? What are the obstacles you face in fulfilling those administrative issues?

6) Teachers' opinion about their own sense of English teaching efficacy

So far all the questions dealt with the aspects of English teaching efficacy suggested by the principals, resources personnel of ELT and retired teachers of English. However, current teachers of English i.e., you and your colleagues may have different views and opinions about your own sense of English teaching efficacy. The ways and means followed by you to make the lesson effective may be very different from views of those principals, resources personnel and retired teachers of English. Hence, as far as your own teaching context is concerned what is your general opinion about your own English teaching efficacy? Do you practise any aspects of effectiveness in your classroom or how do you make your lessons effective? Or you just deliver the lesson without considering anything about effective lessons?

Thank you very much for participating in this in-depth interview session.

2.17 Student sample in pilot study (preliminary study)

Table 2.2: Pilot student sample by grade of study

Students' grade	Students in low-performing schools	Students in high-performing schools
Grade 9	9	13
Grade 10	11	7
Total	20	20

Table 2.3: Pilot student sample by gender

Students' gender	Students in low-performing schools	Students in high-performing schools
Male	8	6
Female	12	14
Total	20	20

2.18 Changes to student questionnaire following pilot study

Table 2.4: Summary of changes to preliminary study student questionnaire

Pilot questionnaire items	Preliminary study questionnaire	Reasons for changing
4) Where did you get your primary education	Where did you get your primary education (from Grade 1 – 5)?	Students had doubt whether the primary education was from Grade 1 to 3 or from Grade 1 to 5
9) Does any member in your family speak in English	Does any member (parents, grandparents, siblings etc.) in your family help you with the English lesson?	Students said that even though they knew English they did not speak
13) Which one of the following is the most used strategy for learning English in your classroom?	learning vocabulary	Students wanted to add 'learning vocabulary' as one of the choices to question 13
No Item	17) We do pair activities during the English lesson	Students wanted to add question 17

2.19 Teacher sample in pilot study (preliminary study)

Table 2.5: Pilot teacher sample

Teachers' gender	Teachers in low-performing schools	Teachers in high-performing schools
Male	1	2
Female	4	3
Total	5	5

2.20 Changes to teacher questionnaire following pilot study

Table 2.6: Summary of changes to preliminary study teacher questionnaire

Pilot questionnaire items	Preliminary study questionnaire	Reasons for changing
No Item	10) Are you the only teacher who teaches English (from Gr 6-11) in your school?	2 teachers in low-performing schools wanted to add question 10
No Item	- Slow learners	A teacher in low-performing school wanted to add this to the list of pedagogical problems
No Item	- Lack of language exposure to students	Teachers low and high-performing schools wanted to add this to the list of pedagogical problems

2.21 Teacher sample in pilot study (main study)

Table 2.7: Pilot teacher sample

Teachers' gender	Teachers in low-performing schools	Teachers in high-performing schools
Male	2	4
Female	3	1
Total	5	5

2.22 Changes to teacher questionnaire following pilot study

Table 2.8: Summary of changes to main study teacher questionnaire

Pilot questionnaire items	Preliminary study questionnaire	Reasons for changing
No Item	Section III: Question 6 - I am discouraged when I think of other well-paid jobs in the private sector.	2 teachers in high-performing schools wanted to add this option to question 6
No Item	Section III: Question 7 - I am frustrated in teaching	Teachers in both low and high-performing schools wanted to add this option to question 7

2.23 Clarifications on teacher questionnaire (preliminary study)


Table 2.9: Clarifications asked by teachers on questionnaire

Teachers who asked for clarifications	Clarifications asked by teachers	Clarifications asked by the researcher
Both LPSs and HPSs teachers	Can the military forces in the social and the educational contexts of the students be mentioned as a political problem?	It could be mentioned if it directly affected the teaching of English.
A HPS teacher	How can I relate the attitudes of the parents towards English with the socio-economic problems?	The social background of the parents may influence their attitudes towards English whether it is necessary for their children or not.

Appendix-3: Approval for the research

3.1 Ethical approval from the university

Signature of Applicant:  Date: 25/01/2012

Signature of Director of Studies:  Date: 25/01/2012

This form together with a copy of the research proposal should be submitted to the Research Institute Director for consideration by the Research Institute Ethics Committee/Panel

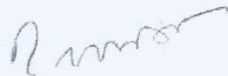
Note you cannot commence collection of research data until this form has been approved

SECTION B To be completed by the Research Institute Ethics Committee:

Comments:
The re-submission of the ethics has now been approved

Approved

Signature Chair of Research Institute Ethics Committee:



Date: 29/03/2012

This form should then be filed with the RS1 form

If in the judgement of the committee there are significant ethical issues for which there is not agreed practice then further ethical consideration is required before approval can be given and the proposal with the committees comments should be forwarded to the secretary of the UREC for consideration.

3.2 Approval from the Zonal Departments of Education

Rev.Fr. Mahan Aloysius
Bishop's House,
Jaffna.
10th July 2012

Director,
Zonal Education Department,
Jaffna.

Dear Sir/Madam

Permission for Conducting Research in English Language Teaching in Government Schools

I am a postgraduate research (PhD – Ref: 1035114) student in the Institute for Research in Education at the University of Bedfordshire, United Kingdom. I have been granted permission by the University to conduct a research in English Language Teaching in Government schools in Jaffna district from July 2012 to January 2013. Hence I humbly request your permission to conduct this research in certain schools in your education zone.

The following schools have been selected for conducting the research

1. HPS
2. HPS
3. LPS
4. LPS
5. LPS
6. HPS
7. HPS
8. LPS

Thanking you.

Truly,

M. Mahan

Mahan Aloysius

Permission granted

VSE

V.Selvarajah
Zonal Director of Education
Jaffna.

NB: Names of the schools are anonymised

NB: Name of the schools are anonymised

Rev.Fr. Mahan Aloysius
Bishop's House,
Jaffna.
10th July 2012

Director,
Zonal Education Department,
Valikamam.

Dear Sir/Madam

Permission for Conducting Research in English Language Teaching in Government Schools

I am a postgraduate research (PhD – Ref: 1035114) student in the Institute for Research in Education at the University of Bedfordshire, United Kingdom. I have been granted permission by the University to conduct a research in English Language Teaching in Government schools in Jaffna district from July 2012 to January 2013. Hence I humbly request your permission to conduct this research in certain schools in your education zone.

The following schools have been selected for conducting the research

1. HPS
2. LPS
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6. LPS
7. HPS
8. LPS

Thanking you.

Truly,

A. Mahan

Mahan Aloysius

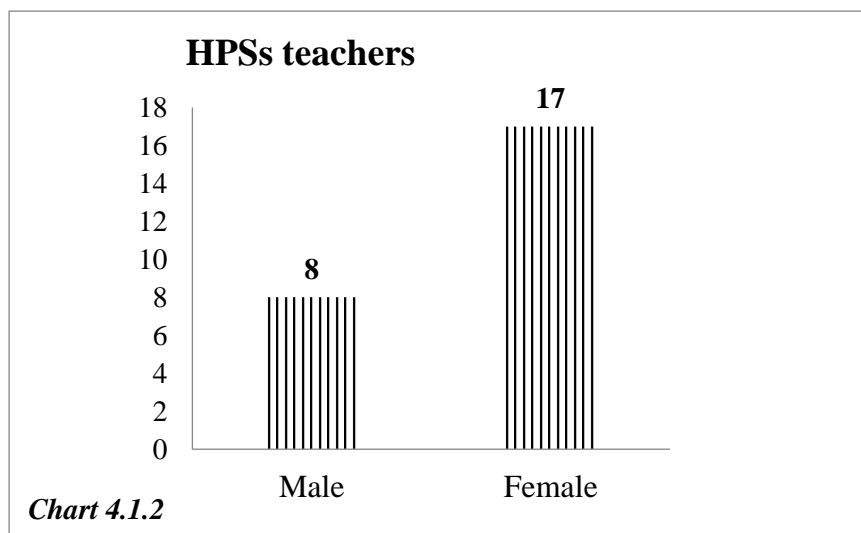
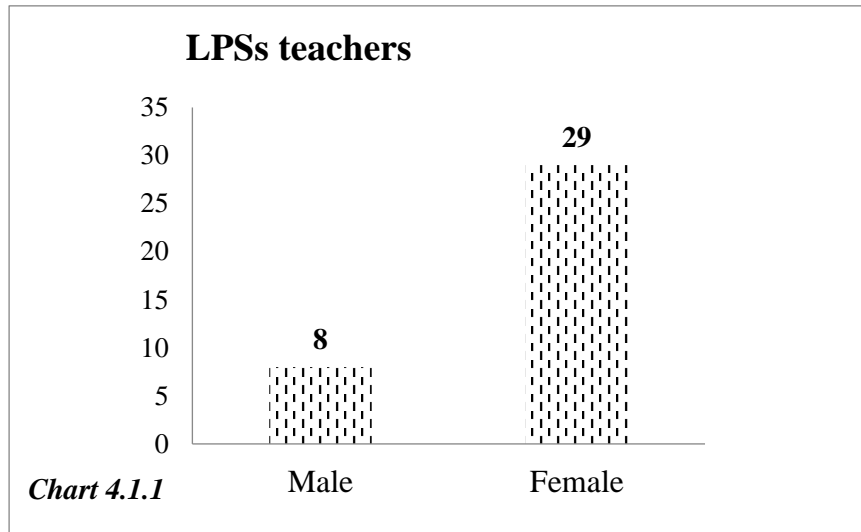
*approved
Dayin*

ஆராய்ச்சிக்குரிய
வலயக் கல்விப் பணிப்பாளர்
வலயக் கல்வி அலுவலகம்
பிளாஸ்ப

Appendix-4: Main study questionnaire data

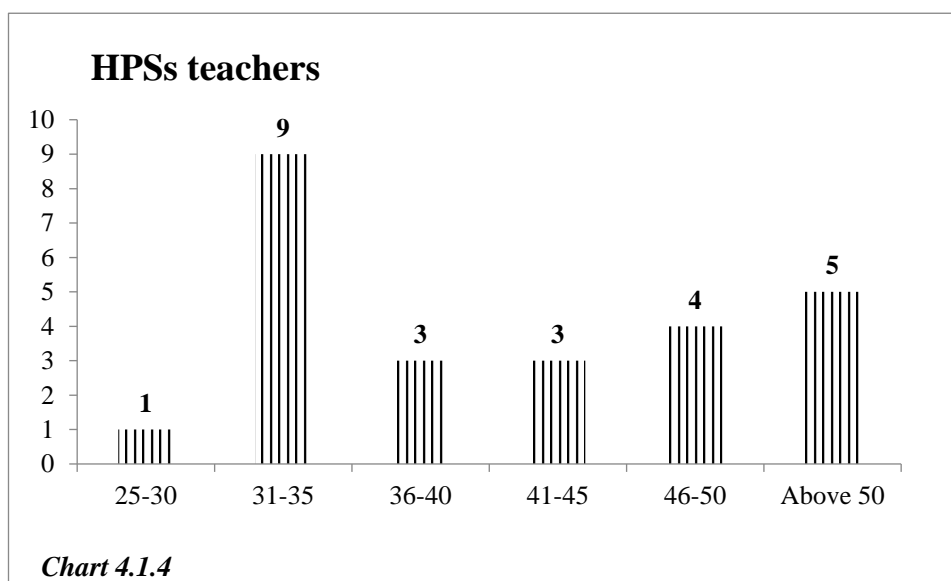
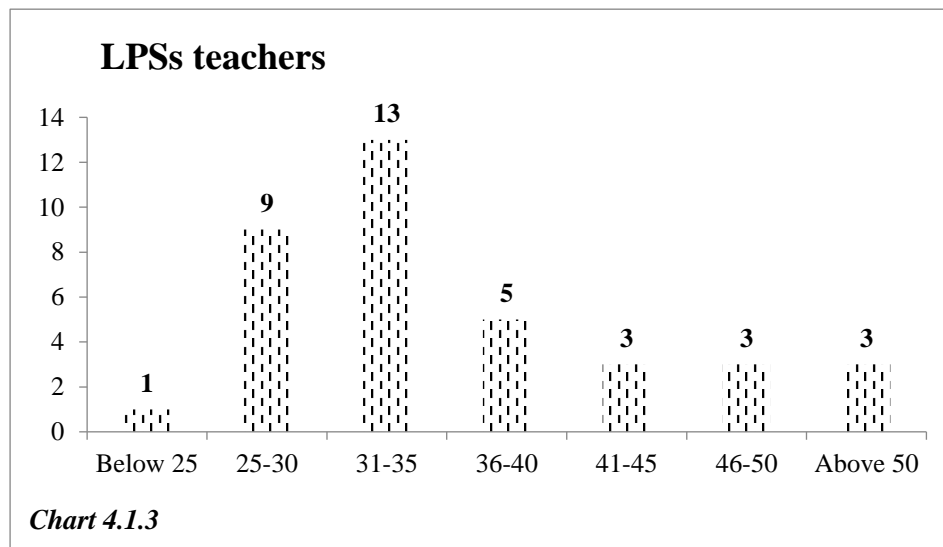
Section I: Teachers' personal information

1. Gender of teachers



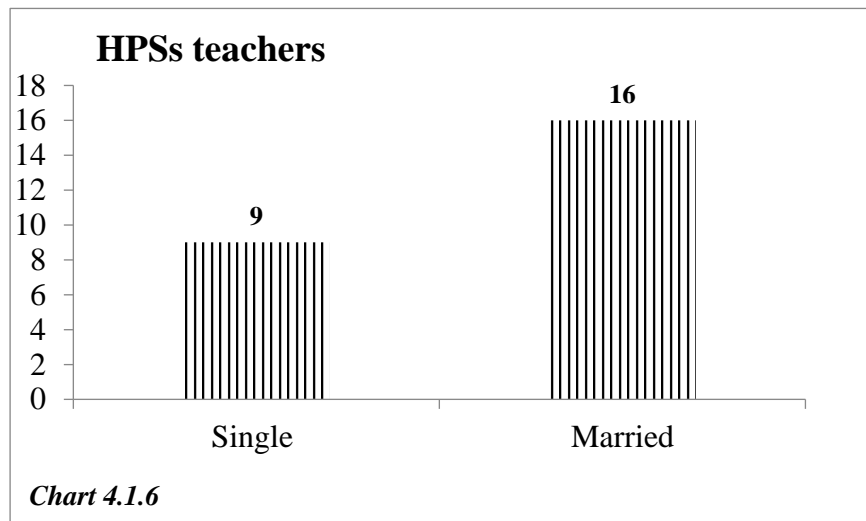
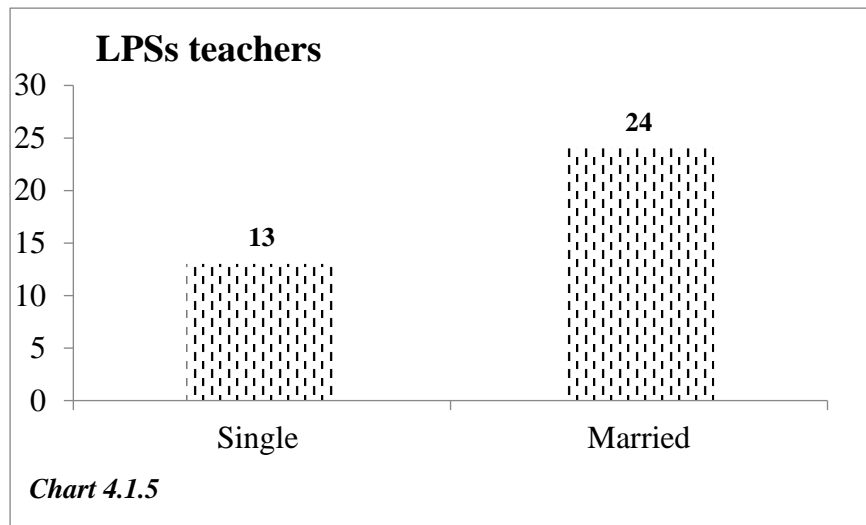
The majority of the teachers in both groups of participants, twenty-nine out of thirty-seven teachers in low-performing schools and seventeen out of twenty-five teachers in high-performing school were female.

2. Age group



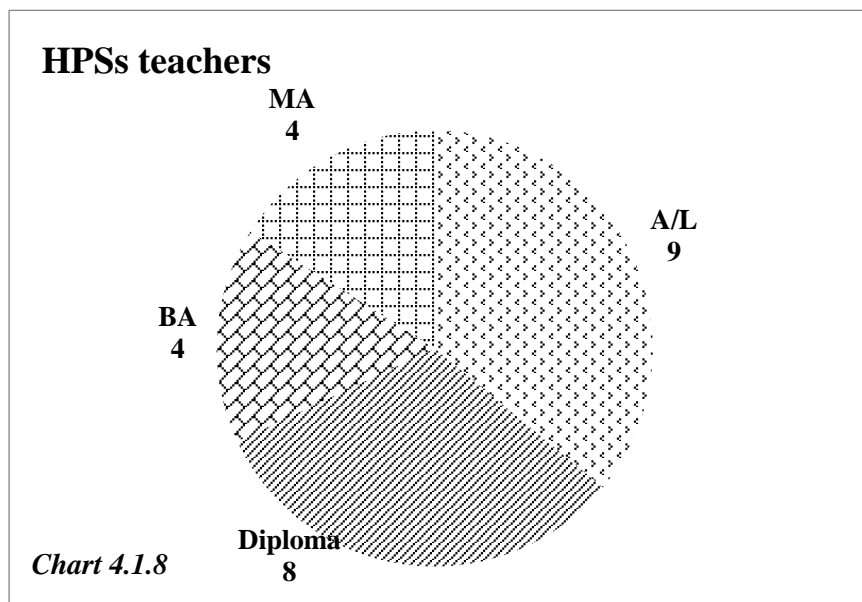
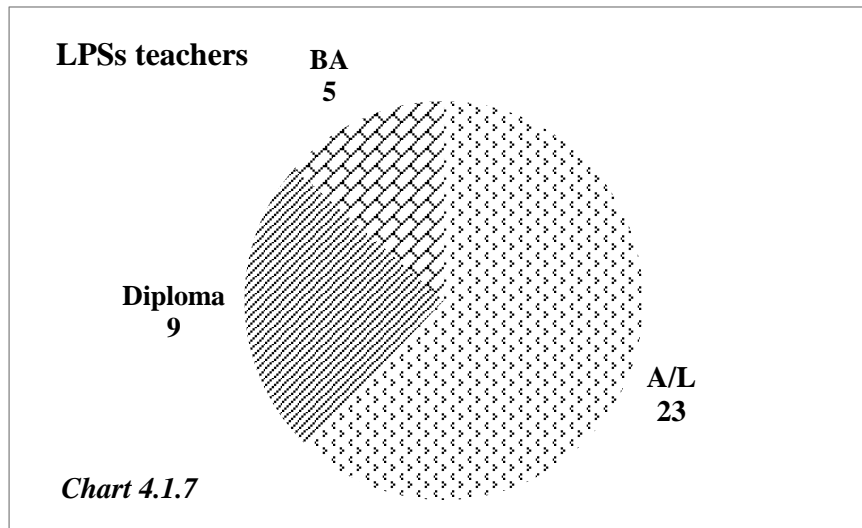
In both groups of participants the majority came under the age group of 31 – 35. Thirteen teachers in low-performing schools and nine teachers from high-performing schools came under this age category.

3. Marital Status of teachers



The majority of teachers in both groups were married. Twenty four out of thirty-seven teachers in low-performing school and sixteen out of twenty-five teachers in high-performing schools were married.

4. Highest academic qualifications of teachers



According to *charts 4.1.7* and *4.1.8*, twenty three teachers in low-performing and nine teachers from high-performing schools had their Advanced Level qualification as their highest academic qualification. Among the high-performing schools, four teachers had postgraduate degree (MA) qualifications.

5. Highest academic qualification through English

Teachers who academically qualified through English	A/L	Diploma	BA	MA	Total
Teachers from LPSs	00	05	02	00	07
Teachers from HPSs	00	07	01	00	08

Table 4.1.9

Seven teachers from low-performing and eight teachers from high-performing schools completed their highest academic qualifications through the medium of English. Hence the majority of teachers had their highest academic qualification through the medium of their first language.

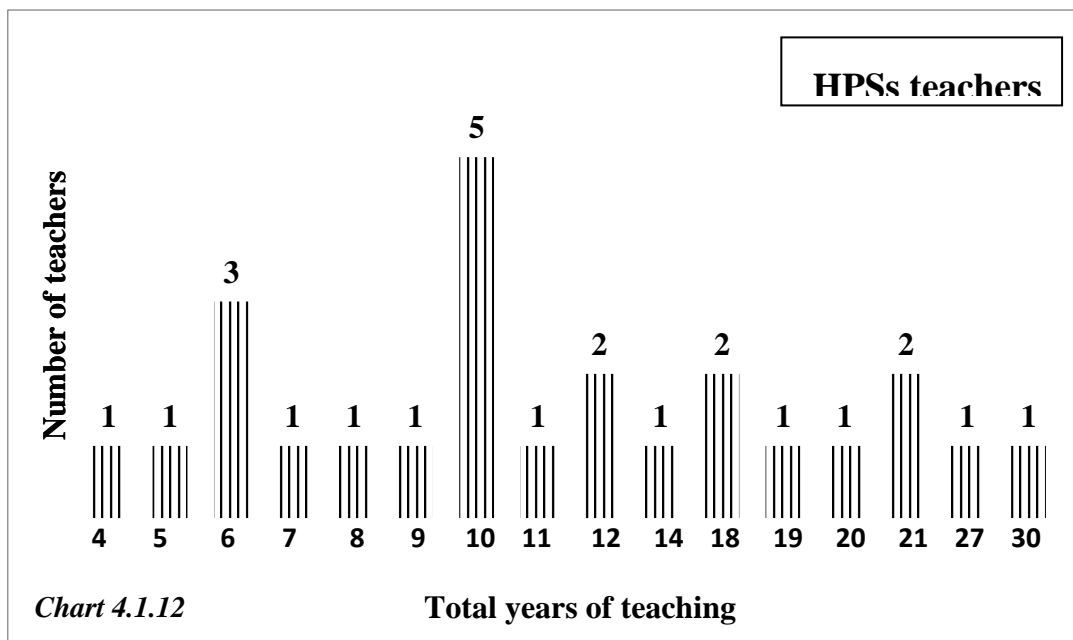
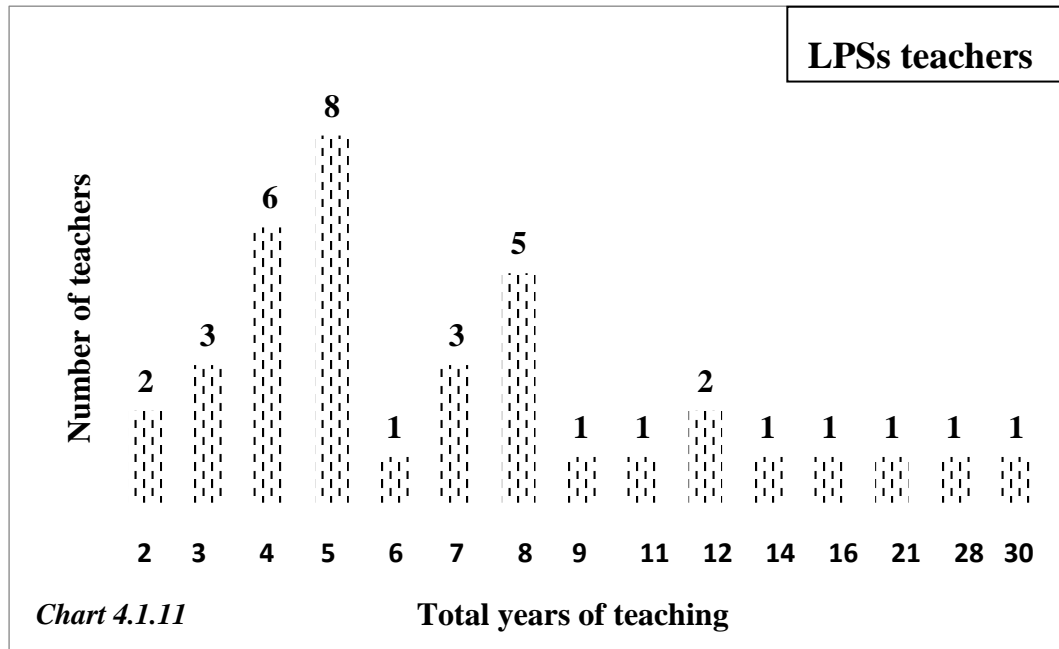
6. Professional qualifications of teachers

	Teacher Training Certificate	National Colleges of Education	No Qualification	Total
LPSs teachers	17	5	15	37
HPSs teachers	13	10	2	25

Table 4.1.10

Table 4.1.10 shows that seventeen teachers from low-performing and thirteen teachers from high-performing schools had Teachers Training Certificate qualifications. Fifteen participants in the low-performing schools had no professional qualification and ten teachers in the high-performing schools had a College of Education qualification.

7. Total years of teaching English



According to *charts 4.1.11* and *4.1.12*, the maximum years of teaching English in both samples was thirty.

8. Purpose of becoming teachers of English:

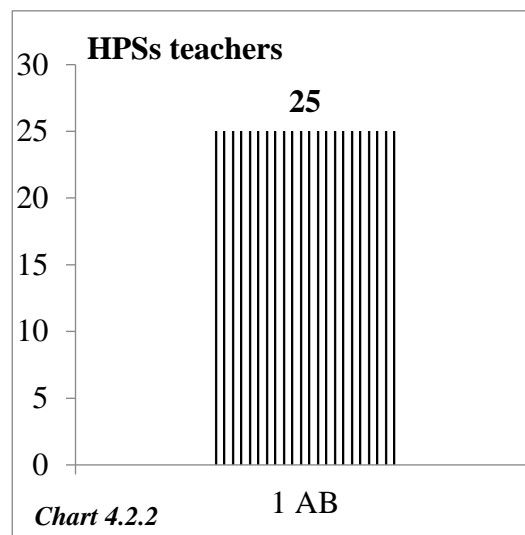
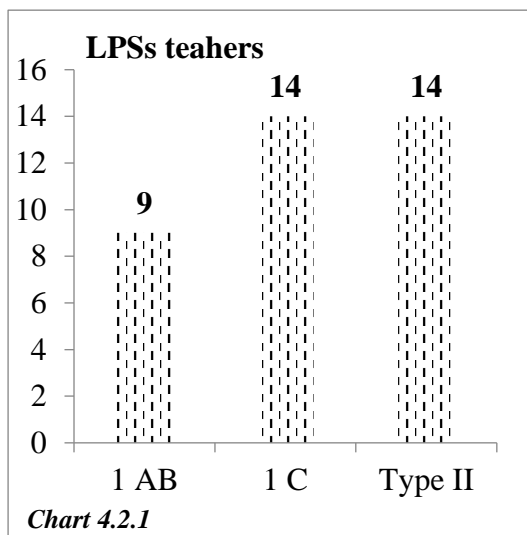
	Ambition	Unexpected	Last Resort	Unexpected & Last Resort	Other	Total
LPSs Teachers	3	11	16	7	-	37
HPSs Teachers	1	8	9	5	2	25

Table 4.1.13

In both samples the majority of teachers chose to be teachers of English as their last resort. For sixteen teachers in low-performing and nine teachers in high-performing schools, the reason for becoming teachers of English was a last resort. The second majority in samples, i.e., eleven teachers in low-performing schools and eight teachers in high-performing schools became teachers of English unexpectedly. The third group of teachers in both samples described their reason to become teachers of English as unexpected and last resort. Only a small percentage of teachers in both groups, i.e., three teachers in low-performing schools and one teacher in a high-performing school revealed that it was their ambition to become teachers of English. Only two teachers in high-performing schools mentioned other reasons to become teachers of English. Both of them said that they chose the profession as their life career.

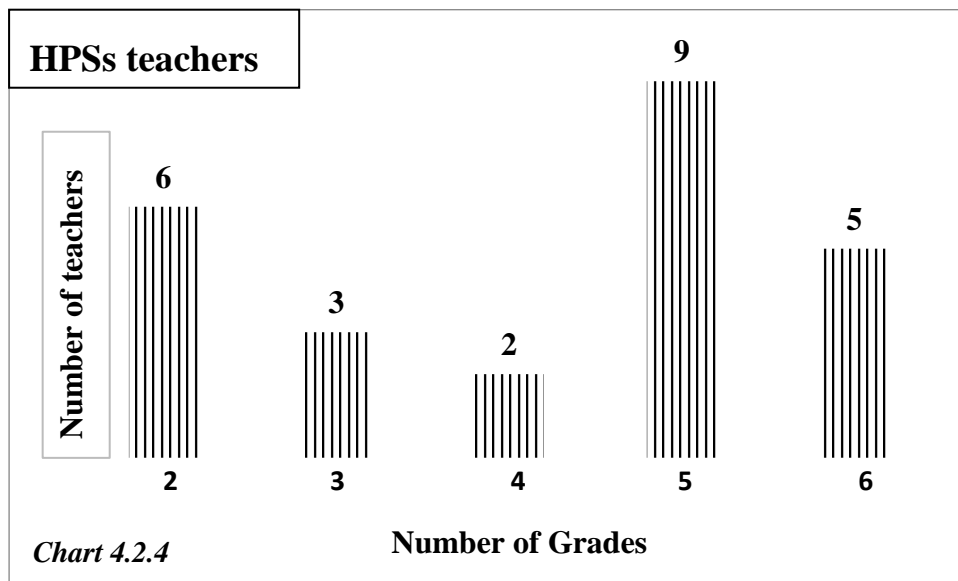
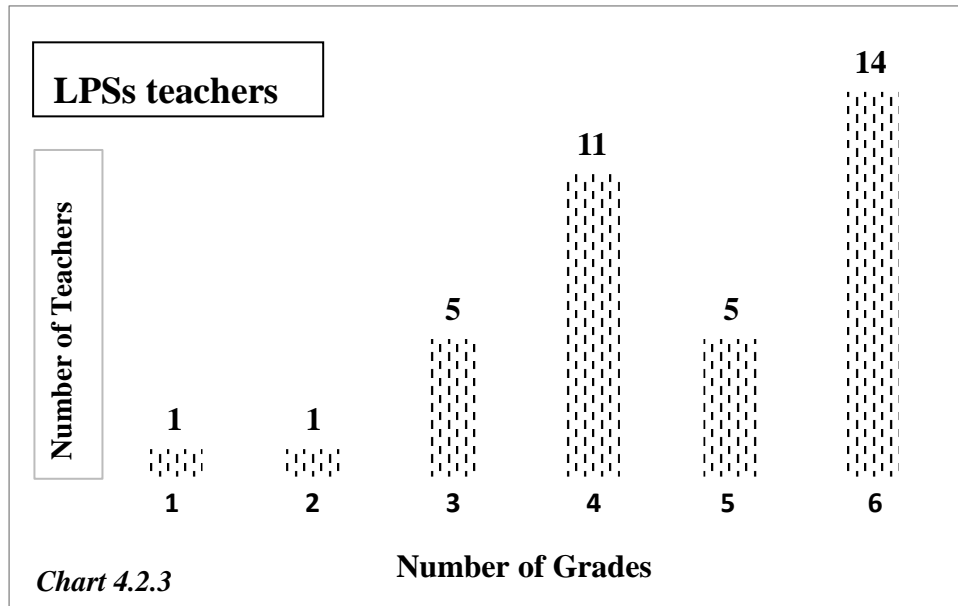
Section II: Teaching contexts of participants

1. Types of schools:



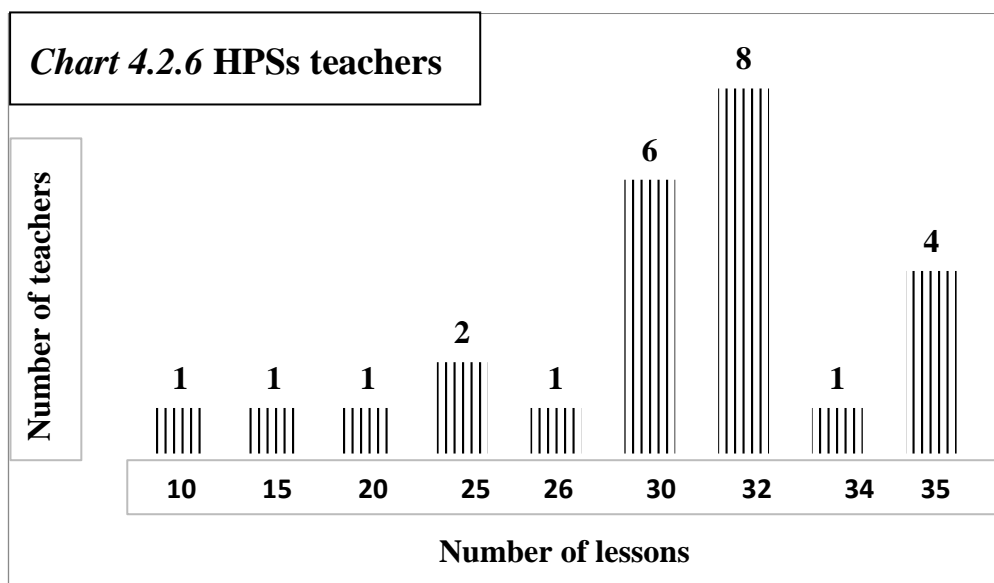
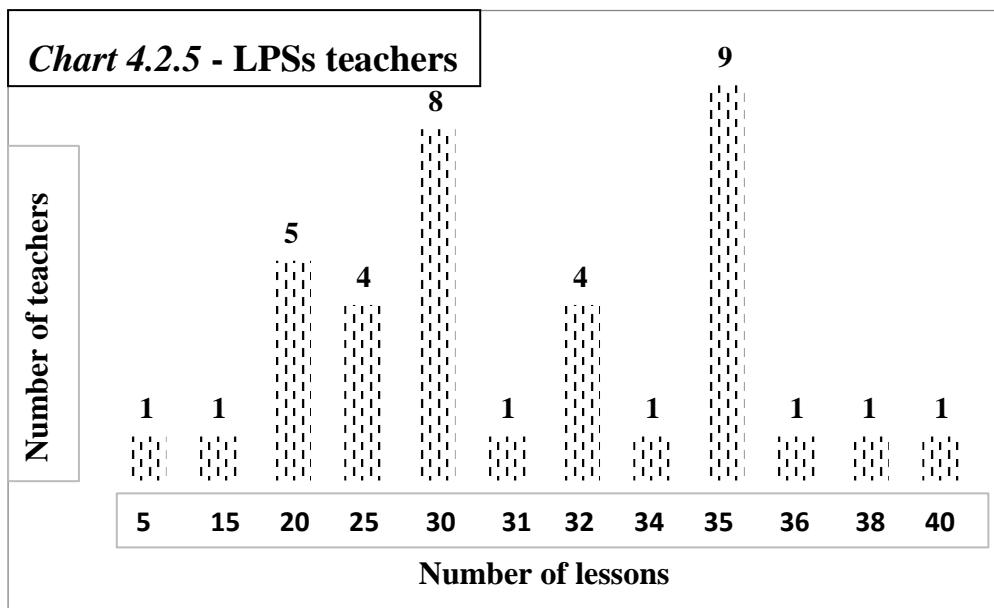
Charts 4.2.1 and **4.2.2** show the number of participants according to the types of schools which came under the two categories of schools used in current research, i.e., low-performing and high-performing schools. The high-performing schools did not include any participants who taught in 1C or Type II schools. However low-performing schools included participants who taught in 1AB Schools. The nine teachers in low-performing schools and the twenty-five teachers in high-performing schools from 1AB schools also included the teachers from the National School which is a sub-category of 1AB school type. Hence three teachers in low-performing schools and seven teachers in high-performing schools were from the National Schools.

2. Number of different grades teachers were teaching:



Charts 4.2.3 shows that fourteen out of thirty-seven teachers in low-performing schools taught English in all six grades. According to **chart 4.2.4**, only five out of twenty-five teachers in high-performing schools taught English in all six grades.

3. Number of lessons teachers were teaching per week:



Charts 4.2.5 and 4.2.6 show how many lessons were taught by teachers of English per week. The maximum number of lessons taught by a teacher in a low-performing school, according to *chart 4.2.5* was forty and by teachers in high-performing schools as seen in *chart 4.2.6* it was thirty-five.

4. Teaching other subjects along with English:

Teaching other subjects along with English	LPSs	HPSs
Number of teachers	12	03

Table 4.2.7

Twelve out of thirty-seven teachers in low-performing schools taught other subjects along with English. Three of the twenty-five teachers in high-performing schools taught other subjects along with English.

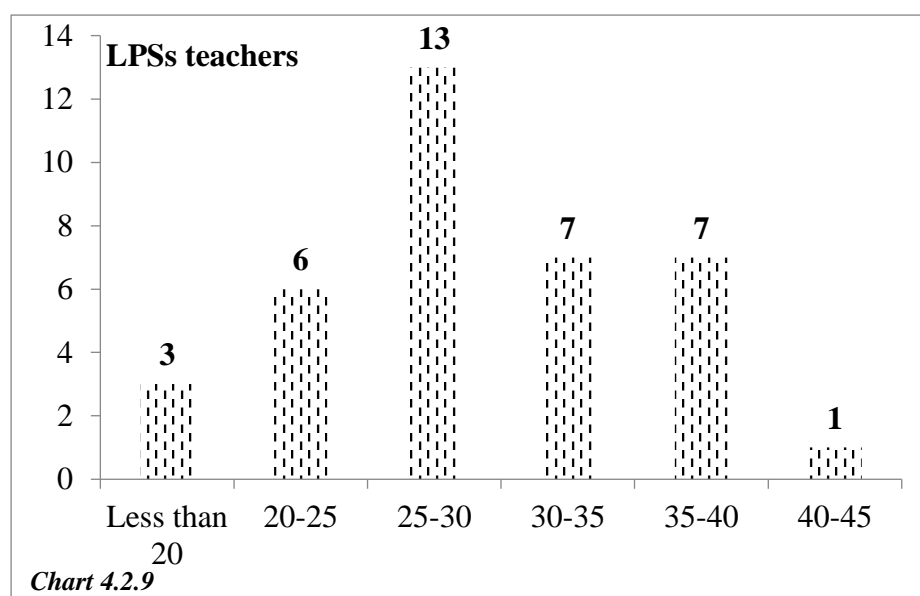
5. Teaching as a sole teacher of English in the school:

Teaching as a sole teacher of English	LPSs	HPSs
Number of teachers	08	00

Table 4.2.8

Eight teachers in low-performing schools taught as only teachers of English in their respective schools. Five out of these eight teachers taught in Type II schools and the remaining three teachers taught in 1C schools. There were no teachers who only taught English in any of the high-performing schools.

6. Average number of students in the classroom:



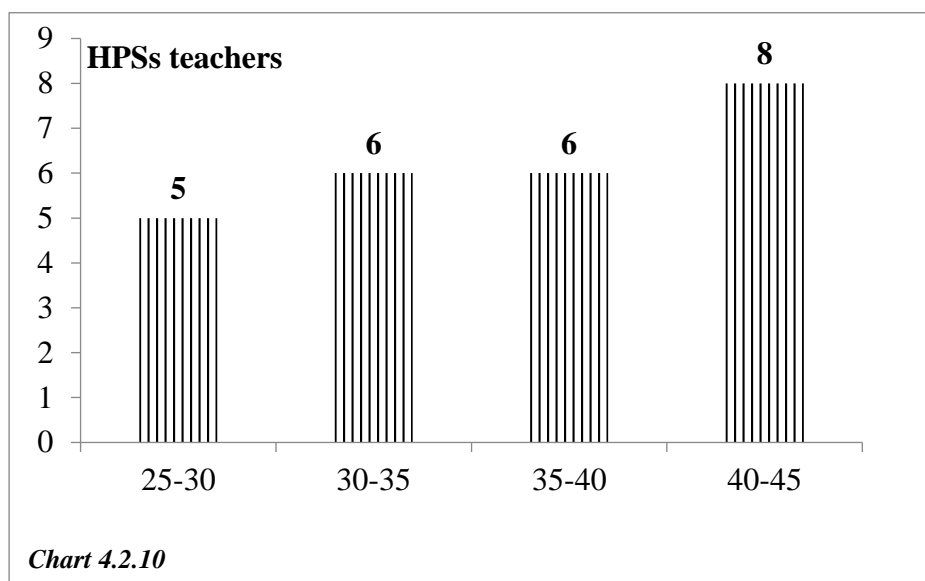


Chart 4.2.9 shows that thirteen teachers in low-performing schools taught in classrooms with students between twenty-five and thirty in number. According to **chart 4.2.10**, the majority of teachers (eight) in high-performing schools taught in classrooms with more than forty students.

7. Number of teachers according to the gender of students they taught:

	Boys	Girls	Mixed	Total
LPSs teachers	5	2	30	37
HPSs teachers	13	9	3	25

Table 4.2.11

According to **table 4.2.11** majority of the teachers (thirty) in low-performing schools taught in mixed schools but the number of teachers in high-performing schools who taught in mixed schools was just three.

8. School climate:

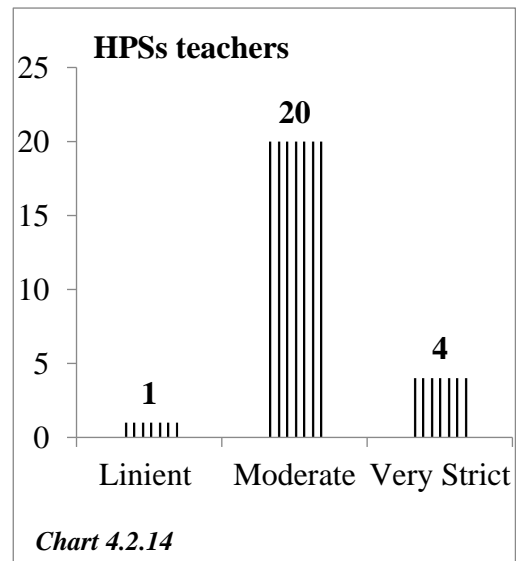
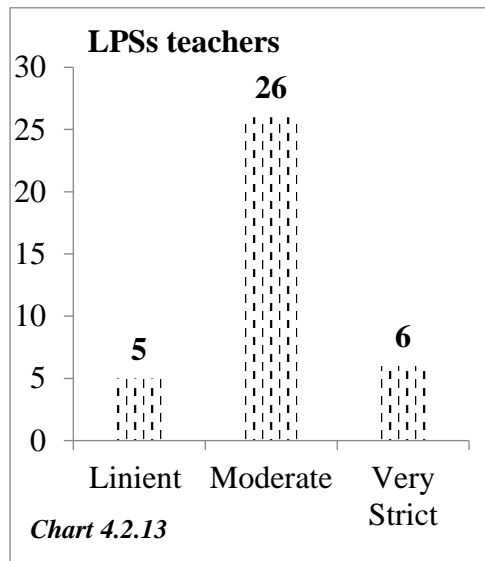
The following table indicates how participants in both samples perceived school climate in simple terms i.e. pleasant, moderate and unpleasant.

	Pleasant	Moderate	Unpleasant	Total
LPSs teachers	16	16	5	37
HPSs teachers	12	13	--	25

Table 4.2.12

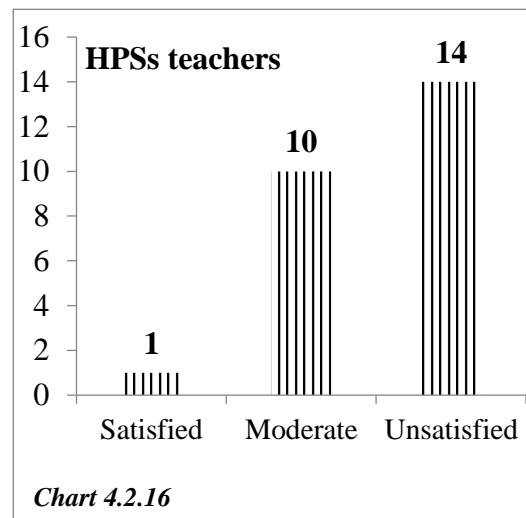
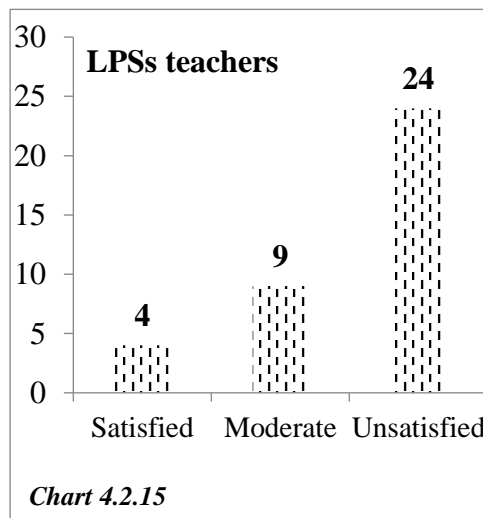
According to **table 4.2.12**, no participants in high-performing schools perceived their school climate as negative, but five teachers in low-performing schools perceived their school climate as unpleasant.

9. School administration:



The charts show that in both samples majority of teachers perceived their school administration as moderate. Twenty six out of thirty-seven teachers in low-performing and twenty out of twenty-five teachers in high-performing schools considered their school administration as moderate.

10. Salary:



According to **charts 6.2.15** and **6.2.16** majority of teachers from both samples were unsatisfied with their salaries. Twenty four out of thirty-seven teachers in low-performing and fourteen out of twenty-five teachers in high-performing schools were not satisfied with their salary. Only four teachers in low-performing schools and a single teacher in a high-performing school have reported in the questionnaire that they were satisfied with their salary.

Section III: Challenges to teaching efficacy of the teachers of English

Table 4.3.1L - Daily lesson preparation: Teachers in low-performing schools

1. Is it difficult for you to spend time to prepare your lessons daily? Yes (30) No (7), because	1	2	3	4	5
I don't have enough time due to my family commitments	7	17	6		
I generally have lots of students' work for correction	6	11	6	7	
I teach many classes (e.g. grades 6, 8, 10 and 11)	14	11	2	1	2
Sometimes I need to do non-teaching tasks given by the school administration	4	15	8	2	
<i>I don't need much time as I am familiar with lessons</i>	1	4	2		
<i>I teach only few classes</i>	2	1		2	2
<i>I have got enough time to do my lesson preparation</i>		4	1	1	
<i>I didn't need much time as my students were in good standard of English</i>				3	3
If you have more appropriate reason(s) or any comments, please state here briefly:					

Table 4.3.1H - Daily lesson preparation: Teachers in high-performing schools

1. Is it difficult for you to spend time to prepare your lessons daily? Yes (20) No (5), because	1	2	3	4	5
I don't have enough time due to my family commitments	2	11	2	5	
I generally have lots of students' work for correction	3	8	6	3	
I teach many classes (e.g. grades 6, 8, 10 and 11)	3	10	1	6	
Sometimes I need to do non-teaching tasks given by the school administration	4	7	1	5	3
<i>I don't need much time as I am familiar with lessons</i>		5			
<i>I teach only few classes</i>			1	3	
<i>I have got enough time to do my lesson preparation</i>		2		3	
<i>I didn't need much time as my students were in good standard of English</i>		2	2		1
If you have more appropriate reason(s) or any comments, please state here briefly:					

Table 4.3.2L - Conducting creative lessons: Teachers in low-performing schools

2. Is it difficult for you to deliver interesting lessons to your students in the classroom? Yes (26) No (11), because	1	2	3	4	5
I am teaching without teacher training	5	7		10	4
My lessons are disturbed by the noise from the neighbouring classrooms	4	16	5	1	
There is a lack of material resources in the school	8	16	1	1	
A good amount of time is spent on controlling my overcrowded classrooms	3	8	13	2	
The duration of the lesson is not enough	3	9	11	2	
It is difficult to have group activities due to a large number of students	2	9	7	8	
I become tired of teaching many classes	3	7	10	5	
<i>I have got a small number of students in my classrooms</i>	3	1		4	3
<i>I am teaching with teacher training</i>	1	2	7	1	
<i>My classroom is located in a quiet place</i>	1	3	5	2	
<i>I have a good command in English language</i>	3	5	2		
<i>My students have positive attitudes towards learning English</i>			7	4	
<i>I can easily access necessary material resources (audio/video, etc.)</i>			3	7	1
If you have more appropriate reason(s) or any comments, please state here briefly:					

Table 4.3.2H - Conducting creative lessons: Teachers in high-performing schools

2. Is it difficult for you to deliver interesting lessons to your students in the classroom? Yes (6) No (19), because	1	2	3	4	5
I am teaching without teacher training				2	4
My lessons are disturbed by the noise from the neighbouring classrooms		2	4		
There is a lack of material resources in the school	1	5			
A good amount of time is spent on controlling my overcrowded classrooms	1	5			
The duration of the lesson is not enough		2	2	2	
It is difficult to have group activities due to a large number of students	3	3			
I become tired of teaching many classes	1	2	3		
<i>I have got a small number of students in my classrooms</i>				14	5
<i>I am teaching with teacher training</i>	1	7	8		
<i>My classroom is located in a quiet place</i>		8	1	9	1
<i>I have a good command in English language</i>		17	2		
<i>My students have positive attitudes towards learning English</i>		9	10		
<i>I can easily access necessary material resources (audio/video, etc.)</i>		2	1	11	4
If you have more appropriate reason(s) or any comments, please state here briefly:					

Table 4.3.3L - Fulfilling students' learning needs: Teachers in low-performing schools

3. Is it challenging for you to teach your students what they really need to learn? Yes (23) No (14), because	1	2		3	4	5
I am expected to follow the textbook	16	6		1		
I am supposed to prepare students for the exam through the textbook	15	7		1		
It is difficult to fulfil different needs of all students	9	9		5		
<i>My principal supports me to teach what I decide is beneficial to my students</i>	4	9		1		
<i>I believe that students should learn something useful for their life rather than studying only for the exam</i>	2	12				
<i>They find it easy to learn what they need as the textbook is too high for them</i>	5	9				
If you have more appropriate reason(s) or any comments, please state here briefly:						

Table 4.3.3H - Fulfilling students' learning needs: Teachers in high-performing schools

3. Is it challenging for you to teach your students what they really need to learn? Yes (17) No (8), because	1	2	3	4	5
I am expected to follow the textbook	3	14			
I am supposed to prepare students for the exam through the textbook	5	12			
It is difficult to fulfil different needs of all students	1	11	4		
<i>My principal supports me to teach what I decide is beneficial to my students</i>	1	5	2		
<i>I believe that students should learn something useful for their life rather than studying only for the exam</i>	5	3			
<i>They find it easy to learn what they need as the textbook is too high for them</i>	1	1	5		
If you have more appropriate reason(s) or any comments, please state here briefly:					

Table 4.3.4L - Teaching the curriculum only: Teachers in low-performing schools

4. Do you generally teach your students only what the curriculum expects of you? Yes (23) No (14), because	1	2	3	4	5
I am expected to coach students to produce better results for the school in the public exams	9	14			
It is easy to do so as students are motivated towards the exam	3	8	8	2	
The time is limited to teach the official curriculum only	7	13	2	1	
It is the primary concern of the parents that teachers should follow the curriculum in view of exams		7	12	4	
Students are not motivated to learn more than they need	4	5	8	2	
<i>I have enough time to teach additional things to my students</i>		2	5	5	1
<i>My principal supports me to teach what I decide is beneficial to my students</i>	2	12			
<i>My students show interest in learning more than what is in the curriculum</i>		2	7	3	
If you have more appropriate reason(s) or any comments, please state here briefly:					

Table 4.3.4H - Teaching the curriculum only: Teachers in high-performing schools

4. Do you generally teach your students only what the curriculum expects of you? Yes (11) No (14), because	1	2	3	4	5
I am expected to coach students to produce better results for the school in the public exams	5	6			
It is easy to do so as students are motivated towards the exam	3	8			
The time is limited to teach the official curriculum only	1	10			
It is the primary concern of the parents that teachers should follow the curriculum in view of exams	4	7			
Students are not motivated to learn more than they need		2	2	4	1
<i>I have enough time to teach additional things to my students</i>		4	2	7	1
<i>My principal supports me to teach what I decide is beneficial to my students</i>		8	4	2	
<i>My students show interest in learning more than what is in the curriculum</i>	3	9		2	
If you have more appropriate reason(s) or any comments, please state here briefly:					

Table 4.3.5L - Self-development of teachers: Teachers in low-performing schools

i. Developing the knowledge of English language

5. It is difficult for you to spend time to develop your personal knowledge of English? Yes (32) No (5), because	1	2	3	4	5
Time is limited due to lots of work (eg: lesson preparation, homework correction, family commitments etc.)	12	12	7	1	
If I speak to my colleagues in English to develop my personal knowledge of English, the teachers of other subjects do not welcome such situations	5	14	8	4	1
Lack of English language exposure in the school environment	17	12	3		
Opportunities (availability of English newspapers or English programmes on Radio or TV or speaking to someone who knows English) are scarce	9	13	4	4	2
<i>I haven't felt the need of it</i>			1	1	2
<i>I am confident with my current knowledge of English</i>	1	4			
<i>I am expected by the school administration to promote English speaking in the school</i>			4	1	
<i>English language exposure in the school environment is high</i>			2		1
If you have more appropriate reason(s) or any comments, please state here briefly:					

Table 4.3.5H - Self-development of teachers: Teachers in high-performing schools

i. Developing the knowledge of English language

5. It is difficult for you to spend time to develop your personal knowledge of English? Yes (9) No (16), because	1	2	3	4	5
Time is limited due to lots of work (eg: lesson preparation, homework correction, family commitments etc.)	1	8			
If I speak to my colleagues in English to develop my personal knowledge of English, the teachers of other subjects do not welcome such situations	2	5	2		
Lack of English language exposure in the school environment		3	2	4	
Opportunities (availability of English newspapers or English programmes on Radio or TV or speaking to someone who knows English) are scarce		3		6	
<i>I haven't felt the need of it</i>			5	6	3
<i>I am confident with my current knowledge of English</i>			6	6	4
<i>I am expected by the school administration to promote English speaking in the school</i>	4	9	3		
<i>English language exposure in the school environment is high</i>	2	1	4	8	
If you have more appropriate reason(s) or any comments, please state here briefly:					

ii. *Developing the pedagogical knowledge of English: Teachers in low-performing schools*

Table 4.3.6L

6. Do you find it difficult to take efforts to develop your pedagogical knowledge? Yes (25) No (12), because	1	2	3	4	5
I cannot ask advice from my colleagues as they are very busy	1	7	10	4	
My principal does not allow me to attend seminars always due to shortage of teachers	1	4	9	8	1
I don't have access to reading materials to develop my pedagogical knowledge	5	15	5		
I don't have time for it due to my personal commitment (eg. Studying for higher study)	1	15	8	1	
I am discouraged when I think of other well-paid jobs in the private sector	2	8	9	4	2
<i>I really like my teaching profession</i>	7	4	1		
<i>There are experienced English teachers working with me</i>	1	2	2	2	4
<i>My principal encourages me to participate in all seminars/workshops</i>	6	3	1	2	
<i>I am confident with my current pedagogical knowledge</i>	2	7	2	1	
If you have more appropriate reason(s) or any comments, please state here briefly:					

iii. *Developing the pedagogical knowledge of English: Teachers in high-performing schools*

Table 4.3.6H

6. Do you find it difficult to take efforts to develop your pedagogical knowledge? Yes (8) No (17), because	1	2	3	4	5
I cannot ask advice from my colleagues as they are very busy	1	2	1	2	
My principal does not allow me to attend seminars always due to shortage of teachers			4	2	2
I don't have access to reading materials to develop my pedagogical knowledge		1	3	4	
I don't have time for it due to my personal commitment (eg. Studying for higher study)	2	2	3		
I am discouraged when I think of other well-paid jobs in the private sector		3	1	3	1
<i>I really like my teaching profession</i>	6	9	2		
<i>There are experienced English teachers working with me</i>	1	10	3	3	
<i>My principal encourages me to participate in all seminars/workshops</i>	2	8	7		
<i>I am confident with my current pedagogical knowledge</i>	1	12	2	2	
If you have more appropriate reason(s) or any comments, please state here briefly:					

Table 4.3.7L - Co-operating with ELT regulations: Teachers in low-performing schools

7. Is it difficult for you to co-operate with the ELT regulations of the school administration (eg: writing notes of lessons/lessons plan/record of work/scheme of work/giving regular assignments to students [SBA] etc.)? Yes (27) No (10), because	1	2	3	4	5
They are additional work to my normal teaching	8	15	4		
I don't get any feedback on them	10	11	5	1	
I am overburdened with many programmes (eg. English as a life skill)	5	16	5	1	
I don't see the impacts of these regulations on my classroom teaching	7	12	7		
I am frustrated in teaching		3	12	12	
<i>I find them helpful in my teaching</i>		4	5	1	
<i>They helps me to be more organized in my teaching</i>	3	7			
<i>I can easily get the help of my fellow English teachers in this matter</i>		5	3	1	
<i>I don't follow these regulations as the school administration doesn't care of it</i>			3	6	1
If you have more appropriate reason(s) or any comments, please state here briefly:					

Table 4.3.7H - Co-operating with ELT regulations: Teachers in high-performing schools

7. Is it difficult for you to co-operate with the ELT regulations of the school administration (eg: writing notes of lessons/lessons plan/record of work/scheme of work/giving regular assignments to students [SBA] etc.)? Yes (6) No (19), because	1	2	3	4	5
They are additional work to my normal teaching		3	3		
I don't get any feedback on them		3	3		
I am overburdened with many programmes (eg. English as a life skill)	2	3	1		
I don't see the impacts of these regulations on my classroom teaching		5	1		
I am frustrated in teaching				5	1
<i>I find them helpful in my teaching</i>	2	3	8	4	
<i>They helps me to be more organized in my teaching</i>	1	15	3		
<i>I can easily get the help of my fellow English teachers in this matter</i>		11	3	5	
<i>I don't follow these regulations as the school administration doesn't care of it</i>			4	12	2
If you have more appropriate reason(s) or any comments, please state here briefly:					

Section IV: Teachers' questionnaire comments

Table 4.4.1L - Comments of teachers in low-performing schools on lesson preparation

Familiarity with lessons	
8 teachers	Though they are familiar with the lesson they need to prepare the lesson as the classroom situation is unpredictable.
6 teachers	Teachers are generally familiar with the lesson, but preparation is necessary for the good of the students.
5 teachers	Though familiar with the lesson, preparation is necessary to be confident in conducting the lesson.
2 teachers	They are familiar with the lesson, but lessons cannot be taught offhanded.
Teaching few classes	
2 teachers	They have few classes but in different grades and hence they need much time to prepare their lesson

Table 4.4.1H - Comments of teachers in high-performing schools on lesson preparation

Familiarity with lessons	
5 teachers	Though they are familiar with the lesson they need to prepare the lesson as they have to follow the scheme of work.
4 teachers	Though familiar with the lesson, preparation was necessary as students could come out with various questions

Table 4.4.2L - Comments of teachers in low-performing schools on creative lesson delivery

Overcrowded classrooms	
5 teachers	Number of students is moderate but classrooms are congested
Duration of lessons	
7 teachers	Duration of the lesson becomes insufficient due to unexpected situations in the classroom or in the school in general
3 teachers	Duration of the lessons becomes a problems when dealing with students with varied learning capacities
Teacher education	
3 teachers	Teacher education has less to do with creative teaching

Table 4.4.2H - Comments of teachers in high-performing schools on creative lesson delivery

Material resources	
7 teachers	Material resources are available but not found in the classrooms to access them easily
Teacher education	
4 teachers	Their teacher education does not actually help teachers deliver creative lessons
3 teachers	Creative lesson should come from teaching experience rather than teacher education
1 teachers	Teachers without teacher education sometimes give excellent creative lessons

Table 4.4.3L - Comments of teachers in low-performing schools on fulfilling students learning needs

The support of their principals	
5 teachers	Principals are not against for teaching what students need for life
8 teachers	Principals support their teachers in teaching what students really need for life but insists on following completing the syllabus first
6 teachers	Principals do not speak about teaching what students really need for life but just want to follow the curriculum
Personal beliefs of teachers	
16 teachers	They believe that students should learn what is needed for their life
4 teachers	They believe that students should learn what is needed for their life but academic performance is necessary to future job prospects
Following the textbook	
5 teachers	Teachers can address the needs of students by using the textbook

Table 4.4.3H - Comments of teachers in high-performing schools on fulfilling students learning needs

Support of their principals	
8 teachers	Though principals have the idea of teaching students what is necessary for their life, they want teachers to make students produce excellent performance in the exams
3 teachers	Principals support but insisted on fulfilling the departments regulations in the first place
Personal beliefs of teachers	
10 teachers	They believe that students should learn what is needed for their life
3 teachers	They believe that students should learn what is needed for their life but they should be given the basic knowledge at school so that they can learn by themselves what is needed for their life
Teaching for exam only	
3 teachers	When students needs are addressed they become more prepared for the exam

Table 4.4.4L - Comments of teachers in low-performing schools on teaching the curriculum only

Principals' support	
11 teachers	Their principals support to teach more than what curriculum contained but cannot avoid preparing students for the exam
5 teachers	Principals did not say anything about teaching more than what curriculum contained

Table 4.4.4H - Comments of teachers in high-performing schools on teaching the curriculum only

Teaching for examinations	
10 teachers	They teach more than what the curriculum contained to prepare students well for exams

Table 4.4.5L - Comments of teachers in low-performing schools on developing their own English proficiency

Need of learning more English	
21 teachers	They felt the need of learning more English
Confidence with current knowledge of English	
4 teachers	They are confident with the current knowledge of English
Lack of learning exposure in the school	
2 Teachers	Teachers have to create the exposure

Table 4.4.5H - Comments of teachers in high-performing schools on developing their own English proficiency

Opportunities for self-development	
5 teachers	Opportunities for self-development are not sufficient.
2 teachers	Teachers have to look for opportunities rather than waiting for them

Table 4.4.6L - Comments of teachers in low-performing schools on developing their pedagogical knowledge

Interest in professions	
11 teachers	They are interested in their profession
Working with experienced teachers	
13 teachers	They are working with experienced teachers
Encouragement of principals	
5 teachers	They get encouragement from principals
7 teachers	They don't get any encouragement from principals
2 teachers	Principals do not give encouragement but always ready to load teachers with more work

Table 4.4.6H - Comments of teachers in high-performing schools on developing their pedagogical knowledge

Reading materials	
10 teachers	They don't get any reading materials to develop their pedagogical knowledge
2 teachers	There are no regular magazines to develop pedagogical knowledge

Encouragement of principals	
3 teachers	They do not get any encouragement
2 teachers	Principals only encourage them to prepare students for better result for their schools
Frustration of teachers	
1 teacher	Becoming frustrated when overloaded with work
2 teachers	Becoming frustrated when the administration does not understand the difficulties of teachers

Table 4.4.7L - Comments of teachers in low-performing schools on co-operation with ELT regulations

The aspect of helpfulness of regulations	
2 teachers	More burden than helpful for teachers
2 teachers	Lack of support from colleagues when teachers are teaching as sole teachers in the school
1 teacher	No help or encouragement from school to fulfil the regulations

Table 4.4.7H - Comments of teachers in high-performing schools on co-operation with ELT regulations

Feedback on their work	
12 teachers	No feedback is given to them by people concerned
5 teachers	Since there is no feedback they follow for the sake of formality
The impact of regulation in classroom teaching	
7 teachers	The regulations have no impact on the quality of teaching
4 teachers	Teachers feels that it is the waste of time fulfilling some regulations which have no impact on their teaching.
The aspect of helpfulness of regulations	
2 teachers	The regulations help them to some extend to be more organized in their teaching

Appendix-5: Main study interview data

1. Problems in being committed to daily lesson preparation

<i>Table: 5.1.1 Various family commitments</i>	
<i>Teachers in low-performing schools</i>	
1,3,4, 5,6,9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers have lack of time due to various family commitments such as fulfilling various needs of their spouses and children and sometimes looking after their elderly parents
1,7,9, 11,12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers have lack of time because they need to give tuition to earn extra money to look after their families
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Though difficult to find time for lesson preparation, giving tuition often help teachers be familiar with the lesson
<i>Teachers in high-performing schools</i>	
2,3,4, 5,6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers have lack of time due to various family commitments such as fulfilling various needs of their spouses and children and sometimes looking after their elderly parents
4,6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers have lack of time because they need to give tuition to earn extra money to look after their families

<i>Table: 5.1.2 Familiarity with lessons</i>	
<i>Teachers in low-performing schools</i>	
1,5,4, 8,11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers manage their daily lesson delivery by their familiarity with the lesson and past teaching experience
2,3,12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers generally try their best to do some preparation but circumstances often forced them to rely on lesson familiarity
6,10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers felt that because of lesson familiarity they became mentally prepared for the lesson
<i>Teachers in high-performing schools</i>	
1,3,6, 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers manage their daily lesson delivery by their familiarity with the lesson and past teaching experience
2,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers felt that relying on lesson familiarity was only alternative for lesson preparation

Table: 5.1.3 Teaching many classes in different grades	
<i>Teachers in low-performing schools</i>	
1,3,4, 5,8,9, 11,12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching many classes a day becomes a problem when teachers find it difficult to get time to prepare their lessons on the previous day
2,4,5, 8,11, 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching many classes a day become more problematic when those classes are distributed among many grades as the teachers have to deal with many different textbooks
1,3,5, 6,8,10 ,11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers can manage to prepare the lessons daily if they are not expected to write each lesson plan in 5E method
<i>Teachers in high-performing schools</i>	
2,4,7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching many classes a day becomes a problem when teachers find it difficult to get time to prepare their lessons on the previous day
1,2,5, 6,7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers can manage to prepare the lessons daily if they are not expected to write each lesson plan in 5E method

2. Problems in delivering creative lessons

Table: 5.2.1 Lack of resources in the classroom	
<i>Teachers in low-performing schools</i>	
1,2,3, 6,7,8, 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers can conduct the lesson only in ordinary ways as resources in the classroom are very minimum
2,4,11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating teaching aids for many students and classes is a time-consuming task
2,3,6, 8,9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no activity room for English subject or the available activity room is not spacious enough to accommodate all students
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Material resources especially the modern technology is not a compulsory feature of creative teaching
<i>Teachers in high-performing schools</i>	
1,3,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers can conduct the lesson only in ordinary ways as resources in the classroom are very minimum

Table: 5.2.3 Excessive number of students	
<i>Teachers in high-performing schools</i>	
1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excessive number of students in the classroom is a real challenge for conducting creative lessons
1,3,4,6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers could not conduct smooth lessons as they find it difficult to control large number of students in the classrooms
1,3,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers cannot provide teaching aids to all students due to large number of students
1,2,4,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is difficult to have group activities due to large number of students
2,3,5,7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are resources but duration of the lesson is not enough to access and use them
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers need to spend their own money to get teaching aids
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are resources but teachers are not interested in taking efforts to make use of them

Table: 5.2.2 Noise of learning environment	
<i>Teachers in low-performing schools</i>	
3,7,9,10,11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noise from neighbouring classrooms greatly affects the lesson
1,4,5,6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since classrooms are located side by side the teaching environment is always noisy
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classrooms are noisy, lack of ventilation and brightness
<i>Teachers in high-performing schools</i>	
2, 3,5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students tend to become very noisy whenever there are no teachers in their classrooms

Table: 5.2.4 Difficulties in accessing the resources	
<i>Teachers in low-performing schools</i>	
2,,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers found that the available resources were not sufficient for the whole class

<i>Teachers in high-performing schools</i>	
1,2,5,6,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers felt helpless in using the available material resources in the schools as lesson time was not sufficient
3,5,7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers were of the opinion that the school administration was not interested in helping teachers access the materials easily

Table: 5.2.5 Problems related to the textbook	
<i>Teachers in low-performing schools</i>	
1,6,8,10,12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The textbook has less interesting or unfamiliar topics to students
2,6,10,12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The language content of the textbook is really high for students
4,11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The textbook does some good to students but not suitable to creative teaching
3,8,12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of freedom for teachers to use some suitable materials for students is a great disadvantage for teachers to deal with below average students
<i>Teachers in high-performing schools</i>	
5,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Textbooks are not suitable for creative teaching
2,4,5,7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers find it difficult to spend time on creative lesson as it would delay the completion of the textbook within the stipulated time.

3. Problems in fulfilling students' various learning needs

Table: 5.3.1 Following the textbook and preparing students for exam	
<i>Teachers in low-performing schools</i>	
5,9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers are expected to follow the textbook according to the scheme of work
1,2,3,5,6,7,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students' learning needs cannot be addressed effectively as time is not sufficient to finish the textbook
1,4,7,5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers feel pressured by the Department of Education to finish the textbook
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Education does not force teachers to finish the textbook but encourages them to cover it as far as possible

<i>Teachers in high-performing schools</i>	
1,3,6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes students and parents expect teachers to finish the syllabus more than the Department of Education does
2,3,5,6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers have no freedom to consider the learning needs of students as they have to finish the syllabus
1,3,4,6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers are primarily expected to prepare students for the exam as education has become result oriented

Table: 5.3.2 Students' learning needs should have been addressed in the primary school

<i>Teachers in low-performing schools</i>	
2,3,6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The learning needs of students are very basic which should have been taught in their primary section
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficient second language programmes should be introduced to primary students
1,5,6,9,11,12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers are ready to help students with their learning needs but they are unable to do so often as they have to complete the syllabus

4. Problems in being committed to the self-development

i. Self-development in English competency

Table: 5.4.1 Lack of language exposure for teachers

<i>Teachers in low-performing schools</i>	
1,2,4,7,8,9,10,12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students rarely speak in English with their teachers in the classroom due to shy or fear of making mistakes
1,2,5,6,8,11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for speaking in English in the school are very less
2,5,6,8,9,10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers also do not have sufficient exposure for language in their social contexts
<i>Teachers in high-performing schools</i>	
1,4,7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers are likely to have more opportunities to speak to their students in English in the classroom as they can manage to respond in English

3,4,5, 7,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers do not get sufficient language exposure in the school (outside the classroom)
1,3,4, 7,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers do not get sufficient language exposure in their social contexts

Table: 5.4.2 Lack of language exposure for teachers due to the current curriculum	
<i>Teachers in low-performing schools</i>	
1,2,4,5, 7,8,10, 11,12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existing curriculum (reading and writing) is a big disadvantage for teachers in self-development of their speaking ability
<i>Teachers in high-performing schools</i>	
2,5,6,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Though students have speaking ability teachers are unable to use it as they need to spend the time with the textbook
2,4,7,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers can only develop their reading and writing skills due to the existing curriculum

ii. *Self-development in pedagogical knowledge*

Table: 5.4.3 Lack of resources and opportunities	
<i>Teachers in low-performing schools</i>	
2,3,7,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers can find enough online reading materials on pedagogical issues but they are not suitable to their local contexts
1,3,10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articles by local authors are hardly available
<i>Teachers in high-performing schools</i>	
3,4,7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for professional development are limited in Jaffna
3,5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading materials by local authors are not available for teachers

Table: 5.4.4 Unequal opportunities for teachers	
<i>Teachers in low-performing schools</i>	
3,4,6,8,9,12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers miss seminars or workshop when they are conducted during schools hours
3,6,9,11,12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers find it difficult to get substitutes when there are seminars for 3 or 4 days continually
2,4,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers in low-performing schools especially young teachers do not have opportunities to get the insights of senior teachers as they often teach English as sole teachers in their schools

Table: 5.4.5 Lack of quality of the available Continuous Professional Development seminars and workshops	
<i>Teachers in low-performing schools</i>	
2,3,5,7,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department of Education provides the outdated or repetitive seminars
2,4,9,11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The seminars provided by the Department of Education do not cater the needs of teachers in low-performing schools
7,8,12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seminars should be conducted with better resource persons such as senior and experienced or retired teachers
2,5,7,8,11,12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seminars are conducted for the sake of conducting them
1,3,4,5,7,11,12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seminars conducted by the British Council are really good
<i>Teachers in high-performing schools</i>	
6,7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The seminars provided by the Department of Education sometimes are not standards enough as if they were conducted just for formality
4,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seminars conducted by foreign organisations are worth attending

5. Problems in co-operating with ELT regulations

Table: 5.5.1 Time consuming tasks	
<i>teachers in low-performing schools</i>	
2,4,5,8,10,11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ELT regulations particularly the notes of lesson is really time consuming as it has to be written in the 5E method
1,5,9,10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ELT regulations are really time consuming especially for teachers who are parents and have lots of household duties.
<i>Teachers in high-performing schools</i>	
2,3,6,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ELT regulations particularly the notes of lesson is really time consuming

Table: 5.5.2 Irrelevant issues of the Department of Education	
<i>Teachers in low-performing schools</i>	
3,7,9,11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Education give same suggestions to low and high-performing schools
2,4,5,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5E method is not appropriate to students in low-performing schools
1,5,7,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notes of lesson written in 5E method cannot be implemented in the classroom and hence students don't benefit from it
<i>Teachers in high-performing schools</i>	
5,6,7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notes of lesson is irrelevant because no feedback is given on notes of lesson and teachers find it difficult to implement it in the classroom

Table: 5.5.3 Impractical issues of the Department of Education	
<i>Teachers in low-performing schools</i>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers cannot do lots of programmes at the same time
3,4,6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Education has same expectations from low and high-performing schools
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Education expects what is not appropriate to students in low-performing schools
2,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Based Assessment is good to make students study but teachers cannot do it along with their other work

<i>Teachers in high-performing schools</i>	
4,5,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Education demands teachers to implement all what they introduce along with doing the textbook

Table: 5.5.4 Frustration of teachers

<i>Teachers in low-performing schools</i>	
1,7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principals or officials from Department of Education fail to encourage or appreciate teachers
7,9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers in low-performing schools work hard but teachers in high-performing schools who do need to work hard (because of their students' standard) enjoy credits
1,7,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School administration fails to support teachers when they are overloaded with work by the Department of Education
8,12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers are treated like wage servants
6,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department of Education demands lots of work from teachers without providing necessary resources
3,5,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Education fails to consider the level of students
6,7,12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Education compares the results of students in low-performing school with students in high-performing schools
5,6,11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Education compares the performance of students in low-performing schools with that of the students in high-performing schools in front of the teachers in high-performing schools and makes teachers in low-performing schools embarrassed
<i>Teachers in high-performing schools</i>	
1,6,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers became frustrated in teaching because of their workload in the school

Table: 5.5.5 Doing things for the sake of doing

<i>Teachers in low-performing schools</i>	
1,2,4,5,8,10,11,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers write notes of lessons for the sake of fulfilling a duty
1,4,8,9,11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Either principals or officials from the Department of Education does not make any comments on notes of lesson or supervise if teachers follow them in the classroom

1,5,8,9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officials from the Department of Education need only some written evidence but are not bothered about its implications
1,5,7,8,10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Education is keen in pass percentage of students but not interested in how much knowledge they get
1,2,3,8,9,12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department of Education conducts seminars for the sake of formality by conducting them in inappropriate time or by inefficient resource persons
<i>Teachers in high-performing schools</i>	
2,5,6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to so many tasks for teachers, they conduct School Based Assessment for the sake of formality
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Education introduces new things but it does not give proper guidance or supervision
4,5,7,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers do whatever the Department of Education demands, because the school administration does not want to have problems with the Department of Education

6. Views of the current teachers of English on English teaching efficacy

Table 5.6.1 Kind of English teaching efficacy that teachers exercise	
<i>Teachers in low-performing schools</i>	
1,3,7,11,12,3,9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making students like the language curriculum as a whole is the aspect of effectiveness in our (my) teaching Teaching students with friendliness
3,4,5,10,2,6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowing the capacity of students and giving what they can grasp is the effective teaching we (I) exercise Understanding students' problems
3,12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking bold decisions for the sake of students and implement them without any fear is the effective teaching we (I) do
7,8,9,10,11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective teaching of English much depends on how much the educational authorities co-operate with teachers in their classroom teaching
<i>Teachers in high-performing schools</i>	
1,2,5,7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> My effective teaching is to make students speak more in English by speaking to them in and outside the classrooms Teachers should speak to students in English during all the informal conversations in the school environment
1,6,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making students participate in more English-day competitions
3,4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective teaching is giving something in order to make them learn the language even after they leave the school

